

Creating a 'Union in Diversity':

European Identity in Twentieth Century Narratives of Travel

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I. Introduction

In *Europe: An Unfinished Adventure*, Zygmunt Bauman demonstrates, through a series of examples from the Bible and Greek mythology, that “Europe is not something you discover; Europe is a mission – something to be made, created, built”.¹ The Europe of today is undoubtedly built upon the policies, governments and leaders of its member states and upon the politics of the European Union’s governing body, but perhaps of the greatest importance in this construction of Europe is the often lesser-considered element of culture and cultural identity. A group of people with different nationalities and different mother tongues cannot experience a sense of togetherness, a sense of community, thanks to policymaking. A sense of cultural belonging is cultivated through more subtle means: through the accumulation over centuries of books, music, poetry and artwork that helps to create a common imagery and a landscape of the European mind. European thinkers, such as Zygmunt Bauman, Jürgen Habermas, Jacques Derrida, Roberto Dainotto and Amin Maalouf, have theorised the current status of Europe: but will their message regarding the importance of European belonging be heeded by the masses? Undeniably, sociology, philosophy, and literary theory do not speak to the public in the same way that literature can, since the latter is inevitably more engaging.

As Manfred Pfister notes in *The Fatal Gift of Beauty*: “One of the original meanings of the Greek word for ‘theory’ is ‘to go abroad and see the world’. This etymological link between theory and travel encourages us to consider traveling as a form of theory, a more or less systematic way of perceiving other countries”.² It is thus that I have selected four examples of narratives of travel from the twentieth century that present their readers with differing

¹ Zygmunt Bauman, *Europe: An Unfinished Adventure* (John Wiley and Sons, 2013), 82.

² Manfred Pfister (ed.), *The Fatal Gift of Beauty, The Italies of British Travellers* (Rodopi, 1996), 3.

conceptualisations of Europe through largely autobiographical narratives that detail travel within Europe, enforced or otherwise.³ From the interwar years, I have chosen *L'Europe galante* by the French writer Paul Morand. Written during World War II is *The World of Yesterday* by the Austrian writer Stefan Zweig, followed by Primo Levi's *La tregua*, an Italian memoir written twenty years later that looks back on the year immediately following World War II. Finally, the American writer Paul Theroux's *The Pillars of Hercules*, written in the 90s, provides the reader with a more contemporary perspective on the Europe formed after the break-up of Yugoslavia. So, to what end do I intend to bring these four texts together? Following the European principle of inclusion – what European theorist Peter A. Kraus refers to as a 'union in diversity' in 2008 in his book by that very name, and what Ulrich Beck describes as "a Europe that helps diversity to flourish"⁴ – my exploration of the Europes presented in these texts will innovatively open up a new perspective for studying the conceptualisation of Europe at seminal moments in its twentieth century history. My study englobes the four different nationalities, mother tongues, and political allegiances of these four authors. I will argue that, despite their incredibly diverse backgrounds and socio-political views, Morand, Zweig, Levi and Theroux all perceive Europe as a value, yet are not unaware of the difficulties of creating an inclusive European identity. I will thus show the common perspective shared by these texts, without fearing, or flattening, their differences, and will investigate which models of Europe these texts envision, examining how they promote a

³ It is key here to note the importance of the nuance between 'narratives of travel' and the more common collocation 'travel narratives'. I have chosen to use the former during this dissertation since I am keen to underline that I do not believe that the narratives in question – with the obvious exception of Theroux's *The Pillars of Hercules* – form part of the 'travel writing' genre, but are instead narratives that are born from travel and use travel as a form of inquiry into the world. While perhaps one could refer to the narratives in question as travel novels, it is at the great risk of diminishing the many other dimensions of these texts. To this end, I prefer the expression 'narratives of travel'.

⁴ Ulrich Beck, *Understanding the Real Europe: A Cosmopolitan Vision* (The SAGE Handbook of European Studies, 2009), 13.

model of cultural belonging that reaches past national borders, thus encompassing Europe and beyond.

Focussing on works by Morand, Zweig, Levi and Theroux, the purpose of this dissertation is to show where the four authors' perspectives on Europe converge and diverge: firstly, from each other, and secondly, from representing an ideal model of Europe. By examining these four authors in light of the theoretical work of current European thinkers, I will explore some iconic moments in the formation and development of European identity in literature over the past hundred years, and I will show how, in the words of Beck:

The path to the unification of Europe leads not through uniformity but rather through acknowledgement of its national differences. Diversity is the very source of Europe's identity and creativity. Even the solution to national problems lies in European interaction.⁵

Beck elaborates that "whereas universalism and nationalism [...] are based on the either/or principle, cosmopolitanism rests on the 'both/and' principle. The foreign is not experienced and assessed as dangerous, disintegrating and fragmenting, but as enriching."⁶ Throughout the following chapters, I will examine the resonances between cosmopolitan pro-European theory, of which Beck is one of the proponents, and the narratives of travel in question, in order to show how the authors bring a positive appreciation of 'difference' to the fore and showcase the 'both/and' principle of European identity construction.

I will proceed in my analysis with a detailed and separate examination of the four narratives, in chronological order. After considering each narrative within its context, two common themes will be rigorously discussed as pillars of the 'union in diversity' that the texts

⁵ Beck, *Understanding the Real Europe*, 3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

envision: the concept of nation and the concept of language. I will show how these authors posit national identity as the first step on the route towards envisaging a more inclusive European or global identity, and how they present language as an intercultural communicative tool for the realisation of this goal.

II. Introduction to Primary Corpus and Socio-Philosophical Ideas

Paul Morand: *L'Europe galante*, 1925

*Paul Morand se fait le géographe ironique de l'Europe qui se relève de la Première Guerre mondiale. Se relève ou se recouche?*⁷

[Paul Morand ironically presents the geography of a Europe that was picking itself up after the First World War. Picking itself up or laying itself down?]⁸

Producing most of his writing at the height of the 'Golden Age Twenties' – or the '*années folles*' [crazy years] as they were termed in France – the French novelist Paul Morand (1888-1976) embodies a rather controversial role in both literary and political circles. In the context of the sudden freedom and economic prosperity that pervaded most of Europe after

⁷ Grasset publishing house official website: <http://grasset.fr/leurope-galante-9782246807445>

⁸ All translations from the original French are my own. Rhian Collings, 2015.

World War I, Morand's writing embraces this era of newfound liberty whilst simultaneously mourning the lost civilisation of Europe's past. There is no doubt that the narrative in question, *L'Europe galante*, acts as a mirror for Morand's hedonistic approach to life and the world, and showcases his conceptualisation of Europe. Whilst his writing cannot be considered strictly autobiographical despite containing many blatant references to his personal circumstances, the autobiographical elements of *L'Europe galante* will take on a certain importance in the context of this dissertation in order to highlight pertinent points of comparison with the three other autobiographical narratives under examination.⁹ Whilst Morand was often dismissed during his lifetime due to his connections with the Nazi and Fascist regimes, my dissertation aims to address this lack of attention.¹⁰ I argue that there are some elements of Morand's writing that have undoubtedly contributed towards creating a positive conceptualisation of Europe that aligns with the Europe that we should be striving to construct in the 21st century.

Morand's is often considered nostalgic, seen as a writer who looks yearningly back at the Europe that was destroyed by World War I. In his 1986 biography of Morand, Manuel Burrus melancholically remarks that "*il [Morand] sonne le glas de l'Europe*" [he tolls the death knell of Europe].¹¹ According to Jean-Paul Sartre, Morand was part of a group of writers that were not "*annonceurs d'un monde nouveau*" [announcers of a new world], but rather

⁹ In the *nouvelle* entitled "*Lorenzaccio*", Morand provides his readers with a footnote that further emphasises the difficulty of defining his writing. This note suggests that it is not possible to develop an understanding of the author through the characters that he portrays: "*L'auteur ne partage envers la noble nation portugaise aucune des opinions de ce héros aigri*" [The author does not share any of the opinions of his bitter hero concerning the noble Portuguese nation]. The disclaimer was not of much use, however, since Portugal subsequently banned Morand from entering the country. If Portugal did not believe Morand when he claimed that his narratives did not display his own opinions, should we, as modern readers of Morand's work, believe what he asserts in this footnote? For more information, see Manuel Burrus, *Paul Morand : Voyageur du XXe Siècle* (Librairie Séguier, 1986), 90.

¹⁰ There was truly very little written about Morand during his lifetime, as Fogel underlines in his 1980 biography. Even now, Morand is paid scarce attention, considering the volume of his literary contributions.

¹¹ Burrus, *Paul Morand: Voyageur du XXe Siècle*, 90.

“liquidateurs de l’ancien” [destroyers of the old].¹² In *Mes débuts*, a short text written in 1934, Morand describes the world that his narratives aim to portray:

*Deux mondes se heurtaient au milieu des éclairs [...], spectacle sans précédent : des frontières nouvelles, des pays hier inconnus, la tour de Babel, les races confondues, les femmes libérées, l’inflation produisant dans les mœurs des effets foudroyants et inconnus, les ennemis se réconciliant après quatre années de silence, la révolution à nos portes, le déclin de l’Occident et bien d’autres merveilleuses apocalypses!*¹³

Whilst Burrus and Sartre’s interpretations of Morand’s work are both quite critical of Morand’s ideological stance, I agree with Ernst Robert Curtius’ description of Morand in 1932 that defines him as neither a purely nostalgic nor an unequivocally forward thinking writer.¹⁴ Curtius writes of Morand as being one of the most interesting figures in French literature during the interwar years who “a su décrire avec art la physionomie d’un monde incohérent, secoué de crises, brouillant les cultures et les continents, confondant le passé et l’avenir” [artfully described the physiognomy of an incoherent world shaken by crises, mixing cultures and continents, confounding past and future].¹⁵

Morand moved in elite circles and kept company with many of the important intellectual figures of his time, such as Marcel Proust and Jean Giraudoux. It is therefore

¹² Jean-Paul Sartre, *Qu’est-ce que la littérature?* (collection Idées no.58, Gallimard, 1964), 235-239.

¹³ Paul Morand, *Mes débuts* (Arléa, 1999), 43. From here onwards, the translations of all quotations longer than four lines can be found in footnotes. [Two worlds were colliding amidst great flashes of lightning {...}, an unprecedented show: new borders, countries that were unknown just the day before, the tower of Babel, the mixing of races, the liberation of women, the inflation that produced striking and unpredicted effects on behaviour, enemies that made peace after four years of silence, the revolution at our doors, the decline of the West and many more marvellous apocalypses!]

¹⁴ In post-war France, it was extremely difficult to enthuse about writers who had explicitly condoned Nazism. Fogel discusses this issue in detail in *Morand-Express* and describes how the inherently left-wing French intellectual and literary circles did not give due attention to right-wing writers like Morand.

¹⁵ Ernst Robert Curtius, *Essai sur la littérature française* (Paris, Grasset, 1932).

unsurprising that his writing often portrays a somewhat blinkered and unremittingly upper class vision of Europe. For Morand, “*un dialogue est possible entre les élites du monde entier, mais les masses ne peuvent se confondre*” [dialogue is possible between the elites of the entire world, but the masses cannot be involved].¹⁶ Burrus accurately notes that “*décidément, la guerre de Morand est une guerre d’antichambre*”¹⁷ [Morand’s war was indubitably a drawing-room war]. Morand travels for pleasure, in a way that only the elite could afford to do, and the main motivation behind his journeys seems to be the sexual pleasure of discovering the women of Europe. In “Vague de Paresse”, one of the *nouvelle*’ in *L’Europe galante*, Morand writes explicitly: “*une fois de plus, je me vis obligé, pour mes amours, de faire appel à la main-d’œuvre étrangère*” [once again, I found myself obliged to turn to a foreign workforce for love].¹⁸ His travels around Europe lead him simply from one mistress to the next, thus posing the question of how his narrative could possibly be taken as an example of inclusive and forward-thinking Europeanism. I argue that, despite sexual discovery being the proclaimed primary focus of the narrative, a discourse on Europe is clearly a hidden subtext to his narrative.

Leaving aside the explicitly erotic nature of his narratives,¹⁹ Morand is a natural traveller and holds Europe as his “*passion centrale*” [main passion].²⁰ In his 1980 biography, Jean-François Fogel refers to Morand as a “*possédé du mouvement*” [one who is constantly in motion]²¹. He liked to travel quickly, as the title of perhaps his most famous work, *L’homme*

¹⁶ Burrus, *Paul Morand*, 102.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁸ Paul Morand, *L’Europe galante* (Les Cahiers Rouges, Grasset, Kindle Edition), “Vague de Paresse”.

¹⁹ Sexuality is a key theme not only in *L’Europe galante*, but also in many of his other works and most notably in *Tendres Stocks* (1921), *Ouvert la nuit* (1922) and *Fermé la nuit* (1923).

²⁰ Jean-François Fogel, *Morand-Express* (Broché, 1980), Chap. 29.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Chap. 1.

pressé [*The Man in a Hurry*], plainly suggests.²² Morand's narratives "*visitent plusieurs pays, souvent plusieurs continents*" [visit several countries, often several continents],²³ thus leading Fogel to describe Morand in these terms: "*partout chez lui et moquant les frontières, il n'a ni patrie, ni époque*" [at home everywhere and ignoring borders, he does not belong to any homeland or era].²⁴ Burrus notes that Paul Morand's outward-looking attitude to the world is born after seeing the Paris 1900 exhibition as a youth. After this event, "*sa patrie c'est l'Univers*" [his homeland is the Universe].²⁵ *L'Europe galante* is a good example of the all-embracing attitude that Burrus identifies in Morand's writing. In this vein, *L'Europe galante* promotes a sense of European multiculturalism: its 14 *nouvelles* are, for the most part, set in different European countries and show characters that cross national borders, such as Francine who leaves France for Germany or Nicu Petresco who leaves Romania for France in search of his "*avenir rose*" [rosy future].²⁶ Morand's texts undoubtedly convey a deep-rooted love of Europe, as he reveals while speaking of his life in Tangier: "*Je me prive d'elle [de l'Europe] pour mieux, d'ici, la contempler, je la regarde avec tendresse*" [I deprive myself of her {of Europe} only in order to better observe her from a distance. I watch her with tenderness].²⁷ This tenderness contrasts with the rapacious nature of Morand's sexual appetite and it is therefore meaningful that he reserves this adjective for an anthropomorphic Europe. For Fogel, "*l'image authentique de Morand l'Européen*" [the authentic image of Morand the European]²⁸ is often lost in other interpretations of his work. He "*a aimé l'Europe*

²² This book was published in 1941 and tells the story of an anxious Parisian man who is not able to slow down and appreciate his life, even when all seems to be working out for him (getting married, having children). Morand himself claims that the main character of his book is heavily based on his own personality. An interesting film adaptation was also made of this book in 1977 by Edouard Molinaro, with the same title.

²³ Fogel, *Morand-Express*, Chap. 21.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Chap. 3.

²⁵ Burrus, *Paul Morand*, 20.

²⁶ Morand, *L'Europe galante*, "Nicu Petresco".

²⁷ Fogel, *Morand-Express*, Chap. 3.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

en vain" [loved Europe in vain]²⁹, writes Fogel, who reveals that Morand "[lui] a ouvert la porte sur l'Europe" [opened the door of Europe to him].³⁰ Not unlike Fogel's biography, in this dissertation I too will highlight the many elements of Morand's writing that address Europe as a cosmopolitan and unified society.

Although Morand is undoubtedly a cosmopolitan, he is, as Fogel claims, a "*cosmopolite aux antipodes de toute solidarité internationale*" [cosmopolitan at the antipodes of all international solidarity],³¹ whose narratives seem to encourage identity construction that reaches beyond national borders whilst paradoxically enforcing national differences and xenophobic attitudes at the same time. In many passages in *L'Europe galante*, it is unclear whether Morand is mocking national stereotypes or perpetuating them. For example, in the passage in which Mme Fredda expresses her sexual desire for Daniel – simply because he is French and the French are, of course, the best lovers – the reader is unsure if Morand's narrative is fighting against the potentially dangerous artificiality of these stereotypes by depicting Daniel's rage and frustration at being judged in this manner or if he is, conversely, endorsing this stereotype. It is this very ambiguity that surely led to the distancing of critics and readers in the inter- and post-war period.

This ambiguity brings us to Morand's often equally ambiguous political tendencies that must therefore be discussed before examining *L'Europe galante* in any detail. Why has he been so rejected by both literary critics and the public alike? A most obvious explanation is the fact that Morand supported and collaborated with the Vichy regime during World War II as an ambassador in both Romania and Switzerland. He was not shy in expressing his overtly

²⁹ Fogel, *Morand-Express*, Chap. 3.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Chap. 58.

³¹ *Ibid.*, Chap. 26.

right-wing ideologies that clearly coincide with racist, sexist and anti-Semitic thinking, opinions that are articulated in *France La Douce*, Morand's 1934 novel.³² Whilst I agree with Curtius that Morand is a twentieth century French writer of great importance regardless of his political allegiance, I do acknowledge the ensuing chronological impasse: the works that I discuss by Morand, and also Curtius' comments, were all made before Morand's more overt collaboration with the Vichy government in 1943.

In *L'Europe galante*, Morand's xenophobia is expressed through the eyes of the character of Daniel, who sees any mixing of nationalities within the borders of France as the nation's downfall, combining the lexicon of illness with that of immigration:

*Il se sentait le fils d'une France sous-alimentée en proie aux maladies étrangères: pelade pâle des exils russes; acide urique anglais; eczéma périodique de l'émigration italienne; taches suspectes d'origine roumaine; colonies de furoncles américains; suppuration levantine, et d'autres germes pondus entre le cuir et la chair des nations.*³³

These factors, coupled with the profound pessimism that permeates Morand's later narratives, undoubtedly make it more difficult to study his work as part of the promotion of an all-encompassing European identity. "*Chaque pays comme chaque journée, est un cadeau; il faut les prendre comme on les offre*" [countries, like days, are presents that we must take as they are given to us],³⁴ says Morand. This blithe attitude and his problematic ideological

³² Whilst this biography provides readers with an overall positive portrait of Morand and his work, Fogel does still take care to point out that he does not condone Morand's views on women, nor his anti-Semitism, nor his racism.

³³ Morand, *L'Europe galante*, "Madame Fredda". It is significant that this discourse materialises after Hitler rose to power and the 'enabling act' of 1933 turned Germany into a totalitarian state. [He felt himself to be the son of an undernourished France, a country threatened by foreign diseases: the pale alopecia of the Russian exiles; English gout; the periodic eczema of Italian emigration; the suspicious stains of Romanian origin; the colonies of American boils; Levantine sores and other germs hatching between the hide and the flesh of nations.]

³⁴ Ibid., "Je Brule Moscou", I.

stance may explain the critical near-silence on Morand in post-war Europe. However, by building on existing research, such as the biographies by Fogel and Burrus, and by comparing Morand's narrative to the works of other writers that also construct an inclusive European identity (authors to whom he has not previously been compared), I will thus highlight the oft-underplayed positive conceptualisation of Europe that I believe underlies Morand's writing. I will discuss his promotion of all that international travel can teach us in terms of open-minded exposure to foreign cultures and acceptance of the other. Besides this, I will explore Morand's forwarding of multilingualism as a tool for intercultural communication between characters from different national backgrounds.

Stefan Zweig: *The World of Yesterday*, 1941

The more truly European someone's way of life
was in Europe, the harder he was hit by the fist
shattering the continent – Stefan Zweig

Like Morand, the German-speaking Austrian Stefan Zweig witnessed the two World Wars. A pacifist, humanist, writer and prominent intellectual, Zweig (1881-1942) also shares with Morand his fall from the public eye, although for very different reasons.³⁵ Whilst Morand's lack of popularity was due to the reprehensible nature of his explicit Fascist, racist and sexist tendencies,³⁶ the lack of attention paid to Zweig is in fact owed to several factors,

³⁵ Interestingly, the writing of Zweig has experienced a 'renaissance' in the last couple of decades, whereas the silence concerning Morand seems to be more complete.

³⁶ Here, Burrus refers specifically to Morand's xenophobia. Burrus, *Paul Morand*, 126.

among which are the censorship of the Fascist government in Germany in the late 30s with the ensuing physical destruction of Zweig's works that took place under the Third Reich, and Zweig's suicide in Brazil in 1942. Nonetheless, before his exile and the burning of his books, Zweig was one of Europe's most widely read authors. He delivered papers at conferences around the world and aimed to share his forward-thinking conceptualisation of Europe and global citizenry with all he encountered. His fiction demonstrates the 'simplified' writing style that he endorses; Zweig took great pleasure in 'cutting down' his works, as did Morand. In this dissertation, I will concentrate on the autobiography that Zweig wrote during World War II, shortly before his suicide in 1942, entitled *The World of Yesterday*, in which he conveys his love for an irretrievable past and a humanity under threat.

Inspired by the humanist Erasmus, of whom he wrote a biography in which he refers to Erasmus as "the first European",³⁷ Zweig's "innate cosmopolitan disposition" led him to travel extensively in his youth, but as Editha Neumann notes, his later travels were "the sorry necessity of political perils" due to exile.³⁸ It is interesting to note that, in opposition to Morand, who Fogel described during the interwar years as being "*partout chez lui*"³⁹ [at home everywhere], Zweig did not have the same freedom of movement by the 1940s and described himself during his last years in exile as "belong[ing] nowhere now, [...] a stranger or at the most a guest everywhere".⁴⁰ *The World of Yesterday* details an intriguing *mélange* of travel for pleasure – for conferences, holidays and visits to other leading intellectuals – and the enforced exile to the USA and Brazil that later took its toll on Zweig. So how to explain the

³⁷ Friderike Zweig, *Stefan Zweig* (W.H. Allen and Co., 1946), 158.

³⁸ Marion Sonnenfeld (ed.), *The World of Yesterday's Humanist Today*, Proceedings of the Stefan Zweig Symposium (State University of New York, 1983). Editha Neumann: "*Wanderer between Two Worlds*", 252.

³⁹ Fogel, *Morand-Express*, Chap. 3.

⁴⁰ It must be noted here that although Zweig makes this claim when writing his autobiography in 1941, this stance does not mirror his earlier feelings in the 20s and 30s, when he considered himself a true citizen of the world. Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, Foreword.

deep-seated yearning that Zweig feels to end his exile and return to his homeland of Austria? It is in fact Zweig's first wife, Friderike, who provides a satisfactory answer to this conundrum in her 1946 biography of her late husband, in which she intelligently notes that "internationally-minded men, not enslaved by love for their homeland, may yet miss their indigenous earth as much as one-sided nationalists".⁴¹ This somewhat accounts for Zweig's deep love of Austria and the German language, and perhaps even goes so far as to shed light on the motives behind his suicide as an irreversibly-exiled Austrian in Brazil.

Described in George Prochnik's 2014 biography as "a man who prided himself on serving as a connector between the intellectual and artistic luminaries of Europe", Zweig too moved mainly in elite circles and befriended the leading intellectuals and artists of his times, such as Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein and Richard Strauss.⁴² In another striking parallel to Morand, whose belief in the elite's potential to promote international dialogue may be considered enough to override his other less inclusive discourse, Zweig gives great importance to the European and worldwide intellectual community as a mode for promoting international dialogue. In *The World of Yesterday*, he writes of the significance of maintaining amity despite the restrictions of the war:

I addressed all my friends in other countries, saying that I would be loyal to them even if closer links were impossible at the moment, so that at the first opportunity I could go on working with them to encourage the construction of a common European culture.⁴³

⁴¹ F. Zweig, *Stefan Zweig*, 198.

⁴² George Prochnik, *The Impossible Exile* (Kindle Edition, 2014), Introduction.

⁴³ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "The Fight for International Fraternity".

In fact, many of Zweig's own beliefs become clear through his praising of other intellectuals and their work. For example, through his praising of the French pacifist Romain Rolland, it becomes evident that Zweig shares his ideals. Zweig writes of how Rolland's work serves "not just one European nation, but all of them and the fraternal connection between them."⁴⁴ He also describes Rolland's *Au-dessus de la mêlée* as being "remarkable"⁴⁵ and recognises Rolland "as the man who would be the conscience of Europe in its time of crisis."⁴⁶ Zweig's all-encompassing interest in European intellectuals even stretches so far as to lead him to write biographies of several of these figures, notably his biography of the Belgian poet Emile Verhaeren in 1910, Rolland in 1921 and Erasmus in 1934.

For Zweig, Europe is his love, the "true home of [his] heart's desire."⁴⁷ Like Morand, Zweig is devastated at the destruction of his beloved Europe and both writers share more than a hint of nostalgia for the Europe past, as the very title of Zweig's autobiography suggests.⁴⁸ In his introductory remarks to this work, written during his American exile, Zweig writes: "Even the home of my heart's desire, Europe, is lost to me after twice tearing itself suicidally to pieces in fratricidal wars."⁴⁹ Nevertheless, for Zweig Europe is simply the beginning of a much larger project. More clearly than Morand, Zweig envisions the construction of an inclusive European identity as the first step towards the construction of a global sense of belonging. Once again, Zweig quotes a prominent intellectual friend, Verhaeren, in order to recapitulate his own ideas: "'*Admirez-vous les uns les autres*", marvel

⁴⁴ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "Brightness and Shadows over Europe".

⁴⁵ Ibid., "The Fight for International Fraternity".

⁴⁶ Ibid., "Brightness and Shadows over Europe".

⁴⁷ Ibid., Foreword.

⁴⁸ In the final year of his life, Zweig wrote *The World of Yesterday* and *Brazil – Land of the Future*. Both works are steeped in the question of nostalgia and the narratives highlight an important contrast between the modes of looking forward and looking back.

⁴⁹ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, Foreword.

at one another, was his [Verhaeren's] message to the nations of Europe."⁵⁰ Zweig uses his narrative to illustrate how this mutual appreciation, this 'marvelling', must be taken beyond the scope of Europe and applied on a worldwide level, as I will discuss in detail in "Beyond Eurocentrism: Europe from the outside" (54).

Given his embracing of the differences within Europe as constituting the core of European identity, it is unsurprising that Zweig shows a true interest in languages, an element somewhat lacking in Morand's *L'Europe galante*. Harry Zohn describes Zweig as being a "modern humanist" and highlights the importance of Zweig as a translator of literary works.⁵¹ Zohn writes extensively of Zweig's work as Verhaeren's translator, but also mentions Zweig's translations into German of several works by Rolland.⁵² These factors lead Zohn to justly remark that "Zweig's stature as a mediator among the literatures of Europe is truly an imposing one."⁵³ It is therefore of little surprise that Zweig himself spoke several languages and gave lectures around the world in French, English, Italian and German.⁵⁴ In *The World of Yesterday*, he describes his family life as being "cosmopolitan"⁵⁵, specifically referring to his mother's Italian family and explains that: "Everyone spoke several languages, and I remember how naturally the conversation around my aunt's table in Paris moved from one language to another."⁵⁶

What makes Zweig's writing so unique is what Prochnik refers to as his "capacity for embracing [...] humanity's sublime variety"⁵⁷. It would be a challenge to find a writer more

⁵⁰ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "Universitas Vitae".

⁵¹ Harry Zohn, *Stefan Zweig, Literary Mediator* (Books Abroad, Vol. 26, No. 2, Spring, 1952), 137-140.

⁵² Zweig also translated many of Verhaeren's poems and plays before writing his biography in 1910.

⁵³ Zohn, *Stefan Zweig*, 137-140.

⁵⁴ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "The Setting Sun".

⁵⁵ Ibid., "The World of Security".

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Prochnik, *The Impossible Exile*, Chapter II.

aware of what unites the human race, more inclusive in his conceptualisation of Europe and global citizenry. It is for this reason that I perceive Zweig's autobiography as playing a key role in constructing the united European identity that the EU ought to be striving to forward today. I will thus analyse *The World of Yesterday* to this end, examining how the narrative resonates with the work of European thinkers such as Bauman's *Europe: An Unfinished Adventure* and Habermas' *The Postnational Constellation*, and showing how, in his autobiography, Zweig demonstrates that national borders are in fact "nothing but symbolic lines on the map."⁵⁸

Primo Levi: *La tregua*, 1963

On the two trips he [Levi] made outside Europe [...], he was discomfited to find himself, especially in the latter setting, presented (and questioned) as a *Jewish* writer – Berel Lang

It's always dangerous transforming a person into a character – Primo Levi

Primo Levi (1919-1987), an Italian Holocaust survivor, was a renowned writer of fiction, non-fiction and autobiographical narratives. Perhaps most famously, Levi writes of his experiences inside a Nazi concentration camp in *Se questo è un uomo*. Later, in *La tregua*, the narrative that I will concentrate on in this dissertation, Levi writes of his eight-month long

⁵⁸ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "The Death Throes of Peace".

repatriation journey from the liberated concentration camps to his home in Turin and details his passing through various European national and linguistic borders in a world in which a collective European identity is becoming particularly apparent. Levi presents his readers with “*la vecchia Europa*” [the old Europe]⁵⁹ caught up in a “*contraddanza selvaggia di separazioni e incontri*” [wild dance of separations and encounters], in which the ‘old’ values are shaken up.⁶⁰ Whilst it is true that Levi’s work is mainly read within the realms of Holocaust studies, I believe that his writing paves the way for a new post-war conceptualisation of Europe and European civic solidarity that begs greater attention and analysis outside of the domain of Holocaust studies. In order to create a sense of European solidarity, Levi’s narratives show an embracing of languages and cultures, which particularly resonates with the writing of Zweig. Herein, I will go beyond the traditional paradigm of the study of Levi and analyse the importance of Levi’s work in contributing towards the creation of an inclusive European identity in concordance and counterpoint to the writings of Morand, Zweig and Theroux. I am particularly interested in highlighting the aspects of multilingualism evident in *La tregua* and underlining how Levi urges his readers to embrace the learning of foreign languages in order to build bridges between different linguistic communities, a concept that I will analyse in relation to the works of both Zweig and Theroux.

If Morand chooses to travel for pleasure and Zweig travels in his last years because of his involuntary exile, Levi was the most violently uprooted from the security of his home, country and language. As Matthew Graves notes in *The Death and Renaissance of the Travel Book*, “insouciant travel of the literary kind was to be one of the first victims of the war”.⁶¹

⁵⁹ All translations my own, unless indicated as being from Primo Levi, *The Reawakening* (Simon and Schuster, 1995).

⁶⁰ Primo Levi, *La tregua* (Einaudi, 1963), 149.

⁶¹ Matthew Graves, “Nowhere Left to Go? *The Death and Renaissance of the Travel Book*”, *World Literature Today*, Vol. 77, No. 3/4 (Oct. - Dec., 2003), 52.

Whilst participating in an Italian resistance mission in the mountains, Levi was captured by the Fascists in December 1943, and transported to Auschwitz in February 1944, where he was interned for over a year before the camp was liberated in January 1945. *La tregua* is the story of the long journey back to his homeland via Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Austria and Germany – a journey surprisingly unmarked by negativity, distrust and delusion. Despite the incredibly inclement circumstances for his travels, Levi's outlook is overwhelmingly positive in its conceptualisation of Europe.

Levi reveals how, through the horrors of the concentration camps, a collective European identity has emerged, which encourages survivors to feel a social and civic responsibility towards each other that reaches beyond national and linguistic borders. Interestingly, this sense of belonging is born in a 'limit situation',⁶² that of the extreme suffering of the Lager and the post-war period following the liberation of the camps. Levi illustrates how, in the aftermath of Auschwitz, European prisoners are united by the horrors of the war that they have lived through together: a war that Levi describes as a European phenomenon involving all of the countries of Europe and whose termination is celebrated by groups of *Europeans* and not by compartmentalised national groups.⁶³ Even during Levi's time in the concentration camps, during his darkest hours, Levi shows his readers that he believes that the prisoner community of the Lager is "a common sample of humanity",⁶⁴ considering primarily what unites the human race and not the factors that separate it into restrictive

⁶² For the literary critic Hans van Stralen: "In literary existentialism, World War II is considered to be the most universal limit situation". Hans van Stralen, *Choices and Conflict: Essays on Literature and Existentialism* (Peter Lang, 2005), 75.

⁶³ Levi, *La tregua*, 144, 107.

⁶⁴ Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 87. Levi further highlights that mankind is a single race at page 71: "The conviction that life has a purpose is rooted in every fibre of man, it is a property of the human substance".

national categories⁶⁵. This perception of the human race as one united and equal body persists in Levi's description of the aftermath of the camps in *La tregua*. As the survivors are slowly repatriated, they pass through a series of transit camps. In each of these places, the survivors create a community by forming attachments to each other and to the land, with often a large part of them not wanting to move on when the various authorities arbitrarily decree that their homeward journey must continue. Angela Flury writes of how this "entangled body of people struggle and strive to situate themselves", forging a "community on the move".⁶⁶

To my mind, the aspect of Levi's narratives that most pertains to the construction of an inclusive European identity is the manner in which he handles language and multilingualism. Both are represented very positively throughout both *Se questo è un uomo* and *La tregua*. In his writing, Levi unites European languages and cultures, adopting an all-embracing and outward-looking attitude that works at subverting what the Jewish studies specialist Sander Gilman refers to as "the borders around a language that resemble territorial borders".⁶⁷ Indeed, Levi constantly presents his readers with a veritable babble of multilingualism. In *Se questo è un uomo*, Levi explains that "*la confusione delle lingue è una componente fondamentale del modo di vivere di quaggiù; si è circondati da una perpetua Babele*" [the confusion of languages is a fundamental component of the manner of living here [in Auschwitz]: one is surrounded by a perpetual Babel].⁶⁸ The "special linguistic culture

⁶⁵ I am not denying that Levi uses many nationally-marked descriptors in his novel, but, as my analysis here shows, that this should not be taken to mean that he compartmentalises humanity into national groups. I would also like to note that national identity is not Levi's main focus in his description of the camps; clearly, his main preoccupation is the master/slave relationship between prisoners and oppressors.

⁶⁶ Angela Flury, *Discovering 'Europe' in the Process of Repatriation: Primo Levi's La Tregua from The Idea of Europe in Literature* (edited by Susanne Fendler and Ruth Wittlinger), 65.

⁶⁷ Sander Gilman, *The Special Languages of the Camps and After in Reasons and Light: Essays on Primo Levi* (ed. S.Tarrow, Center for International Studies, Cornell University, 1990), 101.

⁶⁸ Levi, *Se questo è un uomo*, 44.

created during the Holocaust” that Flury describes, is both the medium and the object of much of Levi’s writing.⁶⁹ Levi represents the learning of other languages as not only vital, but also as an enjoyable experience and writes at length of the pleasure of being able to understand a foreigner. The author himself is left with “*gli occhi scintillanti di gioia*” [eyes shining with joy]⁷⁰ after exchanges in languages not his own, and shows how this cross-cultural communication is key in creating “outward-looking”⁷¹ individuals. Levi’s *La tregua* seems to anticipate the mapping and promotion of the multilingual and multicultural Europe that the EU should be striving to implement today through its language policies that promote multilingualism, such as Maalouf’s *A Rewarding Challenge* European treaty.

As Berel Lang notes in his biography of Levi, quoting Levi’s 1989 work *The Drowned and The Saved*, Levi’s all-encompassing love for humanity invariably permeates his narratives. The linguistic aspect, which has not been a main object of inquiry so far in studies of Levi, plays a pivotal part in his love for humanity. Levi writes: “I contracted the habit of never remaining indifferent to the individuals that chance brings before me”, an engagement that is upheld in his writings on a linguistic level, as the most intimate and defining aspect of his relationships with his fellow human beings.⁷²

⁶⁹ Angela Flury, *Sounds of Defiance: The Holocaust, Multilingualism and The Problem of English* (edited by Alan Charles Rosen), 7.

⁷⁰ Levi, *La tregua*, 61.

⁷¹ Amin Maalouf (chair), *A Rewarding Challenge. How the Multiplicity of Languages could Strengthen Europe in Proposals from the Group of Intellectuals for Intercultural Dialogue set up at the initiative of the European Commission* (Brussels, 2008), 14.

⁷² Berel Lang, *Primo Levi* (Kindle Edition), 112.

Paul Theroux: *The Pillars of Hercules*, 1995

I suppose that's my problem – asking questions

– Paul Theroux

Paul Theroux (1941-), the American travel writer whose most famous work is widely considered to be *The Great Railway Bazaar* (1975), believes that “all places, no matter where, not matter what, are worth visiting”.⁷³ Despite Europe not being the primary concern in the majority of his narratives, in *The Pillars of Hercules*, Theroux's 1995 account of his travels around the Mediterranean, Europe is, at last, given centre-stage. In *The Pillars of Hercules*, Theroux passes through all of the countries that border the Mediterranean Sea, presenting a Mediterranean identity that includes the North of Africa, rather than forwarding an identity that remains restricted to the outermost borders of Europe. When asked by a certain Mr. Wong in a Chinese restaurant in Gibraltar why he is visiting the peninsula, Theroux simply answers: “Because I've never been here before”.⁷⁴ It thus becomes evident that Theroux travels for “a sense of discovery” and, much like Morand, he enjoys the sense of being constantly in motion.⁷⁵ Comments such as, “I was happy again, on the move”, leave the reader in no doubt that Theroux does not appreciate sitting still.⁷⁶ Theroux's narrative resonates with certain aspects of Morand's right-wing political and social ideology, with Zweig's concept of Europe as a stepping-stone towards global belonging and with Levi's glorification of European

⁷³ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 53.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 231.

multilingualism. It is thus that the inclusion of an ‘outsider’⁷⁷, that is to say a non-European author, feels justified in the context of this dissertation. I argue that, despite his inherent misanthropy, Theroux focuses on the coexistence of the European – or rather Mediterranean – peoples.

Although he does indirectly experience The Yugoslav Wars in his travels through Croatia and Albania, Theroux is easily the traveller who is most unhindered by war and conflict and who, like Morand, travels for the unadulterated pleasure of exploring. Despite the clement circumstances in which he undertakes his trips, Theroux explains in a 2003 interview: “I don't see it [travel] as luxury. It's the opposite. Travel is nasty”.⁷⁸ Theroux decides to visit the Mediterranean because it has been “so over-visited it was haunted and decrepit, totally changed. Change and decay had made it worth seeing and an urgent subject to record”.⁷⁹ Theroux notes that *The Pillars of Hercules* “is my Mediterranean”⁸⁰ (Italics mine), in which “the foreground – these sudden strange encounters – was much more interesting than the Roman amphitheatres and the ruins”.⁸¹ Theroux’s narrative details the reality of contemporary Europe rather than the Europe of the past and concentrates more upon the people that inhabit its cities than the cities themselves. “Places had voices that were not their own; they [the places] were backdrops to a greater drama”,⁸² writes Theroux, which shows how he perceives the population of a place to be the fruit of a mixing of cultures – or “voices” – that transcends any monocultural tradition.

⁷⁷ Theroux moved to the UK in 1972, where he resided for approximately 20 years. Labelling him as an ‘outsider’ is therefore open for discussion. He currently resides between Hawaii and Massachusetts.

⁷⁸ Emma Brookes, “Travel is Nasty”, interview with Paul Theroux (*The Guardian*, 9 June 2003).

⁷⁹ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 6.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 458.

Fogel includes a short interview with Theroux in *Morand-Express*. Theroux tells Fogel that he perceives travelling as being the discovery of how the long return homewards can change the traveller.⁸³ The connection between Morand and Theroux seems to lie far deeper than this happenstance, however, and can be observed in their right-wing political tendencies and in the underlying pessimism present in their works. Whilst it is true that Theroux's narrative voice is not always particularly likeable – he perceives the duty of a travel writer as “a quest for detail, conversation as a form of ambush, the traveller as an agent of provocation”⁸⁴ – political allegiances and social tendencies that conflict with our own should not stop us from examining the works of certain artists and intellectuals. After all, as Theroux points out in his narrative with regard to Salvador Dali's political ideas, Dali “reached the conclusion that he [Franco] is a saint”.⁸⁵ Had Dali's artwork been abandoned due to his Fascist tendencies, a great part of European cultural heritage would have been lost. It is thus that we must not set aside the work of Morand and should instead examine it all the more closely in light of his later explicit Nazi ideology.

Theroux ought not, therefore, to be considered merely as a right-wing misanthropist. Although his sense of vitriolic irony is often overwhelming, his conceptualisation of Europe united by the Mediterranean Sea in *The Pillars of Hercules* is far-reaching and innovative and has more in common with Zweig and Levi than may initially meet the eye.⁸⁶ He openly condemns the current European xenophobic trend that is becoming all too common. In comments on the French banning of English words, he states: “It seemed to me that hating foreign words was perhaps related to hating foreigners, and was another example of French

⁸³ Fogel, *Morand-Express*, Chap. 23.

⁸⁴ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 405.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸⁶ The negativity that is inherent to Theroux's writing is not due to the fact that he uses irony, but more related to the way in which he uses it.

insecurity”.⁸⁷ For Theroux, in fact, the Mediterranean is a “limitless” and “inspirational” feature that unites its seaside dwellers, regardless of whether they live within Europe or in Africa or Asia, and irrespective of the language that they speak.⁸⁸ As Theroux so rightly points out, “there were advantages to being in the European community, but the Mediterranean was a community, too”.⁸⁹ Could there be a more resounding call to feel a sense of unity that reaches beyond the borders of Europe towards a conception of global citizenry? While describing the bonds that unite this Mediterranean community, Theroux shares his appreciation for multilingualism as a tool for intercultural communication with his readers. In Theroux’s opinion, “no language is difficult. Language is an activity, a kind of play, learned though practice”. In an interesting point of departure from the other authors in question, Theroux is against romanticising language and sees it more as a functional tool for communication than as an element of identity. *The Pillars of Hercules* undoubtedly allows Theroux to encourage his readers to reach out towards other languages and cultures to construct an inclusive European and global identity.⁹⁰

Theroux, a coastal traveller, claims that what he sees as he travels around the Mediterranean bears “little relation to what was happening five miles inland [...]. That hinterland was not my subject, though; I did not care about the perplexities of Europe”.⁹¹ Despite this disparaging comment, Theroux does make a significant contribution to the construction of an inclusive European identity, even as he shies away from this precise terminology. It is to this end that my dissertation aims to highlight those aspects of *The Pillars of Hercules* that resonate most strongly with the Europe of today, elements that have been

⁸⁷ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 96.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 93, 86.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 108.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 118.

⁹¹ Ibid., 26.

little examined in scholarly research to date. Theroux's perception of the Mediterranean as a "sea that obliterated any clear idea of nationhood" should lead the realms of literary criticism and current European theory alike to examine Theroux's concept of the Mediterranean as "a cultural bouillabaisse" with greater care, as I aim to do in this dissertation.⁹² If, as Theroux points out, "like the greatest cities in the world, Alexandria belonged to everyone who lived in it",⁹³ should Europe then not belong to all those who choose to live within its boundaries, regardless of their nation of birth?

III. Embracing the Diversity of European National Identities: The Importance of the Nation as Part of the Collective European Whole

The more solitary you are, the more vulnerable you will be

Paul Theroux, *The Happy Isles of Oceania*

Mon dieu non, je ne suis pas la Parisienne qu'aucun autre spectacle

*que Paris ne doit toucher. Je peux vivre sans les Galeries Lafayette!*⁹⁴

Paul Morand, *L'Europe galante*

⁹² Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 97, 96.

⁹³ Ibid., 350.

⁹⁴ [Dear God, no, I am not one of those Parisians that is moved by nothing but Paris. I can live quite well without the *Galeries Lafayette*]

Benedict Anderson explains our need to construct narratives of identity, since the continually developing nature of identity through history implies that our identities are inevitably subject to the “‘forgetting’ the experience of this continuity”.⁹⁵ According to Anderson, it is therefore necessary to document an identity as it develops, out of fear that the very essence of that identity will disappear if it is not recorded through cultural production. The authors in question chronicle their experiences of European travel in order to share their accounts of the turbulent periods, namely the two World Wars and the breakup of Yugoslavia, which have been primary geopolitical and cultural events in the development of a European identity in the twentieth century. It is thus due to the fact that these authors produced concrete, written logs of their involvement in and/or observation of these events that has allowed their experiences to become part of the archives of ‘what it means to be European’ today.

Spanning the twentieth century, the narratives of travel of Morand, Zweig, Levi and Theroux promote a forward-thinking and inclusive conceptualisation of the relationship between nation and identity. All four authors show their readers that the importance given to national borders can be subverted through the motion of travel, in which these arbitrary lines on the map are crossed by the travellers in question. In accordance with the renowned pacifist Romain Rolland – who is echoed by contemporary thinkers in believing that national and European identity are not ‘mutually exclusive’ affinities⁹⁶ – these four authors use their narratives to promote a sense of European or supranational identity, by urging their readership to rethink their relationship with their nation as part of a collective European whole, and to perceive diversity as being not Europe’s weakness, but rather its greatest

⁹⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1983), 205.

⁹⁶ For more information, see Romain Rolland, *Au-dessus de la mêlée - Edition intégrale* (Kindle, 2015).

strength. The authors in question do this by first promoting a sense of national identity as a preliminary step towards creating a European identity and, subsequently, by showing how one can reach beyond the nation in identity construction – thus forwarding a more inclusive sense of European-ness and inter- or supra- national belonging.⁹⁷ This is shown in concrete and easily graspable terms in the narratives of travel in question, thus demonstrating how philosophical and sociological discourse on Europe is often more understandable when communicated through the medium of literature.

In this chapter, I will firstly show how the four travel narratives examine the construction of national identity and how they problematise the traditional link between nation and identity. Secondly, I will discuss how all four of the authors in question encourage their readership to reach beyond national identity to conceive a sense of European identity. Finally, I will examine how the four narratives encourage us to consider yet more inclusive manners of conceptualising the link between identity and place.

Celebrating National Differences, Whilst Pointing to Their Limits

In the words of Beck, “it would be utterly false to think of the national and the cosmopolitan [...] as two mutually exclusive political principles. [...] Rather, the cosmopolitan must be conceived as the *integral* of the national”.⁹⁸ It is to this end that the four narratives of travel in question glorify the great contrasts that exist between the different nations of

⁹⁷ It must be noted here that the authors in question are far from being the fathers of European thought, since the development of a supranational European identity had been previously discussed in great detail by hosts of European thinkers, such as Mazzini (1805-72) or Coudenhove-Kalergi (1894-1972) to cite just two of many. By way of example, a few more contemporary proponents of European identity are Bauman, Derrida, Habermas, and Maalouf.

⁹⁸ Beck, *Understanding the Real Europe*, 7.

Europe, whilst nevertheless showing that one must not be restricted to the limits of national borders in conceptualising identity. As E.J. Hobsbawm notes, nationalism is “a complicating factor”⁹⁹ in identity construction and is a phenomenon that is “past its peak”¹⁰⁰. This is also indicated by Giorgio Agamben (1942-), who exposes that the connection between birth and nation is pure fiction, and thus shows that to speak of ‘national’ identity is no longer coherent in our modern world.¹⁰¹ Yet, many Europeans are still turning to this comforting but over-simplified identity in the political upheaval of the twenty-first century. Bauman notes that the current resurgence of nationalism is, in fact, no more than a misguided attempt to protect oneself against globalisation.¹⁰² Indeed, the post-World War II decades taught Europeans that they must reach beyond the nation to construct their identity, but the alternatives are not easy to comprehend, as Bauman suggests. Other common misperceptions between national identity and the state as a repository for such an identity are highlighted by Walker Connor, who explains that the ‘nation’ is the “psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it” and gives them a common sense of belonging and homogeneity, which is not to be confused with the ‘state’, which is a political construct.¹⁰³ Connor points out that although the confusion of these terms has had a “negative impact on the study of nationalism”, [...] a supranational and suprastate-consciousness of being European [must surely become] the primary identity” in the twenty-first century.¹⁰⁴ Returning to Hobsbawm, then, we can see that he is not alone in considering that the world of the late twentieth century and the early 21st century “can no longer be contained within the limits of ‘nations’” and requires us to

⁹⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth and Reality* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 191.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹⁰¹ Angela Pilch Ortega, *Transnational Spaces and Regional Localization* (Waxmann Verlag, 2012), 99.

¹⁰² For further details, see Bauman, *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*.

¹⁰³ Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism* (Princeton University Press, 1994), 92.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 100, 90-91.

reach towards supranational identities.¹⁰⁵ This conceptualisation applies to Europe, as is forwarded by the narratives of travel discussed in this dissertation and that will be examined in greater detail in the second part of this chapter. Firstly, however, let us concentrate on how Morand, Zweig, Levi and Theroux celebrate the diverse national identities that they discover during their travels.

As Romain Rolland pronounces so eloquently, nationalism and internationalism need not be two mutually exclusive concepts.¹⁰⁶ On the contrary, nationalism “*nel miglior senso della parola*”¹⁰⁷ [in the best sense of the word], as Levi would say, ought to be considered an appropriate first step towards creating an enlarged European ‘family of nations’. This should be a step towards bridging the gap between nations and envisaging a European identity, a process that has always been easier to envision for elites than for the common people, as we will see later on in the chapter. This idea of nationalism playing an integral part in internationalism had in Mazzini one of its first proponents circa 1840, and resurfaced in Europe with renewed force and a sense of urgency at the beginning of the twentieth century, through thinkers such as Rolland and Zweig. As Rolland explicitly states in his pacifist essay *Au-dessus de la mêlée*: “*Non, l’amour de ma patrie ne veut pas que je haisse et je tue les âmes pieuses et fidèles qui aiment les autres patries*” [No, a love for my own country does not imply that I should hate and kill the pious and faithful souls that love other countries].¹⁰⁸ This line

¹⁰⁵ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 191.

¹⁰⁶ This idea is equally expressed very clearly in Fuch’s *Cultural Diversity, European Identity and The Legitimacy of the EU*: “National and European identities can coexist and complement each other” (72). For more information, see Dieter Fuchs, *Cultural Diversity, European Identity and The Legitimacy of the EU* (MPG, Books Group, UK, 2011).

¹⁰⁷ Primo Levi, *I sommersi e i salvati*, (Einaudi, 1986), 150.

¹⁰⁸ Here, in order to clarify Rolland’s position, it is necessary to distinguish between the terms ‘nationalism’ and ‘patriotism’. Both terms refer to the relationship between an individual and their nation; however, there is a vast difference between the two. George Orwell, in his essay *Notes on Nationalism* in 1945, sums up this difference quite succinctly (1): “By ‘nationalism’ I mean first of all the habit of assuming that human beings can be classified like insects and that whole blocks of millions or tens of millions of people can be confidently labelled ‘good’ or ‘bad’. But secondly — and this is much more important — I mean the habit of identifying oneself with

of thought is further developed in Rolland's essay *Jaurès*, in which, just a few months after his assassination, the French socialist leader Jean Jaurès is described by Rolland as "*ce grand Européen*" [that great European]. Using Jaurès himself by way of example, Rolland states that we must simultaneously believe in "*l'amour de sa patrie et le respect des autres patries*"¹⁰⁹ [love for one's own country and respect for other countries].

Departing from the pacifist perspective yet still forwarding Rolland's 'love for one's own country', Morand's narratives are particularly instrumental. As Michel Collomb notes in the *République des Lettres* in 1997 while writing of *Tendres stocks*, Morand – whilst being a "*chantre du cosmopolitisme*" [supporter of cosmopolitanism] – "*est d'abord un vrai Parisien, fier d'appartenir à cette bourgeoisie cultivée*" [is first and foremost a true Parisian, proud to be a part of this well-educated bourgeoisie]¹¹⁰. Morand's narratives could not make this more clear, since he often portrays characters that are inherently patriotic, verging on nationalist at times. In "Les Plaisirs Rhénans" in *L'Europe galante*, Morand underlines the importance that the character Walter gives to patriotism. In the following dialogue between two lovers,

a single nation or other unit, placing it beyond good and evil and recognising no other duty than that of advancing its interests. Nationalism is not to be confused with patriotism. Both words are normally used in so vague a way that any definition is liable to be challenged, but one must draw a distinction between them, since two different and even opposing ideas are involved. By 'patriotism' I mean devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force on other people. Patriotism is of its nature defensive, both militarily and culturally. Nationalism, on the other hand, is inseparable from the desire for power. The abiding purpose of every nationalist is to secure more power and more prestige, not for himself but for the nation or other unit in which he has chosen to sink his own individuality". For further information, please see George Orwell, *Essays* (Everyman, 2002).

¹⁰⁹ In this collection of essays, Rolland shows how it is possible to achieve this, by including two manifestos – one by the Dutch and another by the Catalans – which both use the strength of a powerful national group as a tool towards achieving international unity. In these examples, the fiercely unified groups do not believe in forwarding their unity to the detriment of their national unity or to their supranational unity to Europe. On the contrary, in their manifestos, it becomes clear that they see their own individual unity as groups as a step towards creating an over-arching and more inclusive identity at a national or inter-national level, where differences are respected and celebrated as integral parts of the whole.

¹¹⁰ Michel Collomb, "Qui est Paul Morand?" from *La république des lettres*, numéro 36 (Paris: April 1997).

national loyalty is stronger in Walter's heart than any feelings he may have for his lover. After their sexual encounter, Walter's lover insists that he spell out his love for her.

"- Walter, vous m'aimez?

Il repond: - Moins que ma patrie."¹¹¹

[" - Walter, do you love me?

He replies: - Less than I love my country].

To my mind, this brief dialogue sheds light on the underlying premise of Morand's narrative, which could easily be misinterpreted; although *L'Europe galante* seems, on the surface, to be little more than a tale of romantic conquests, the text is also used to portray the political landscape of the times.

In *I sommersi e i salvati*, Levi also touches upon the issue of nationalism, expressing that he can understand why some people feel such an intrinsic tie to their native lands.¹¹² He puts himself into their shoes and writes: "*Questo villaggio, o città, o regione, o nazione, è il mio, ci sono nato, ci dormono i miei avi. Ne parlo la lingua, ne ho adottato i costumi e la cultura*"¹¹³ [This village, or town, or region, or nation, is mine. I was born here, my ancestors were laid to rest here. I speak the language of this place, and I have adopted its customs and culture]. Levi, however, always remains clear that love for one's own nation must not come at the expense of hating other nations. His coherence does not waiver even when put to the ultimate test; when asked whether he hates the Germans in a letter to his German translator, he responds clearly that "*non sopporto che si giudichi un uomo non per quello che è ma per il*

¹¹¹ Morand, *L'Europe galante*, "Les Plaisirs Rhénans".

¹¹² For Levi, this is also an explanation as to why the Jews did not save themselves by emigrating before the situation in Europe escalated in the 1930s.

¹¹³ Levi, *Sommersi*, 133.

gruppo a cui gli accade di appartenere"¹¹⁴ [I cannot stand it when a man is judged not for what he is, but for the group that he happens to belong to]. On the other hand, Levi is often keen to celebrate the diversity and the uniqueness of the national identities that exist within Europe:

*Uno spirito di ogni popolo esiste (altrimenti, non sarebbe un popolo); una Deutschtum, una italianità, una hispanidad: sono somme di tradizioni, abitudini, storia, lingua, cultura*¹¹⁵

[a spirit of each people exists (otherwise, it would not be a people); a *Deutschtum*, an Italian-ness, a *hispanidad*: they are the sum of traditions, habits, stories, language and culture].

Zweig also deals overtly with this notion of national identity in the constitution of a 'popolo', or people, in his article *Il pensiero Europeo nella sua evoluzione storica* [European Thought in Its Historical Evolution], originally presented at a conference in Florence in 1932.¹¹⁶ Zweig explains how each nation within Europe has the right to desire to express its unique national identity whilst still remaining part of a European whole, in much the same way that a person is justified in wanting to express their unique individuality within any given group. "*Cos'altro sono i popoli, però, se non individui collettivi?*" [What are peoples, in fact, but collective individuals?], Zweig writes. In fact, in her 1948 biography of her husband, Zweig's first wife Friderike, from whom he divorced in 1938, intelligently notes that "internationally-minded men, not enslaved by love for their homeland, may yet miss their indigenous earth as much as one-sided nationalists".¹¹⁷ In her lucid comment, it becomes apparent that

¹¹⁴ Levi, *Sommersi*, 143.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹¹⁶ This article is, as yet, unpublished in English, hence I have used the Italian translation, published in 2015.

¹¹⁷ F. Zweig, *Stefan Zweig*, 198.

patriotism is not an evil in itself. Friderike accounts here for Zweig's deep-rooted love of Austria and the German language when he is far from his 'indigenous earth'. Zweig, despite his internationally minded view, missed the very sum of traditions, habits, stories, language and culture of which Levi so eloquently spoke.

All four of the authors in question make explicit references to national stereotypes in their narratives. Morand writes of Germans as being typically bragging: "*Walter a dû tout lui raconter. C'est bien allemand*"¹¹⁸ [Walter must have told him everything. That's very German]; Russians as being typically stony-faced and elusive: "*C'est le premier Russe que je vois sourire, parler sans baisser la voix*"¹¹⁹ [It's the first Russian that I have seen smile, or speak without lowering their voice]; and the French as being typically regarded as romantic gentlemen: "*En amour, n'est-ce pas, être Français, c'est la moitié du chemin. J'adorerais les Français, si j'étais étrangère*"¹²⁰ [In love, being French is half the work, is it not? I would love French men, if I were foreign]. In all of these passages, it is unclear whether Morand is mocking these stereotypes or perpetuating them.¹²¹ It later becomes clear through Daniel's rage at Mme Fredda that Morand is actually going against these stereotypes by using his narrative to show quite how frustrating it is to be judged.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Morand, *L'Europe galante*, "Les Plaisirs Rhénans".

¹¹⁹ Ibid., "Je Brule Moscou", II.

¹²⁰ Ibid., "Je Brule Moscou", I.

¹²¹ Let us note here the negative connotations of the word 'stereotype'. As Rogério Puga points out in a clear review of the literature on the subject in Chapter 1 of *Imagologia e Mitos Nacionais*, perhaps it would be better to use a word such as 'imagotype' that does not have the same negative charge. For more information, see Puga, Rogério: *Imagologia e Mitos Nacionais: O Episódio dos Doze de Inglaterra na Literatura Portuguesa (c.1550-1902) e o Nacionalismo (Colonial) de Teófilo Braga*. University of Goa (India), CETAPS-FCSH/NOVA. Lisbon: Caleidoscópio, 2014.

¹²² The following passage illustrates this point: [Mme Fredda] "*Je vous ai abordé, Monsieur le Joli [Daniel], parce que je voudrais connaître l'amour avec un Français. Les Français ont, chez nous, une énorme réputation de raffinement extraordinaire. [...] Accablé de fatigue [...], Daniel eut de la peine à contenir sa rage.* [Mme Fredda] I approached you, Mr le Joli {Daniel}, because I would like to experience love with a Frenchman. In our country, the French have a great reputation of extraordinary sophistication. [...] Overcome with fatigue [...], Daniel struggled to contain his rage.]

In *L'Europe galante*, Morand introduces a meta-narrative reflection on the reason behind including such stereotypes in his writing. In one of the *nouvelles* from *L'Europe galante*, “*Céleste Julie*”, at yet another upper class dinner party, the Russian opera singer Julie criticises the character of the writer (modelled on Morand himself) as a writer that merely repeats stereotypes:

*En fait de merveilles, vous prenez à tache de ne nous montrer que l'épilepsie des Russes, la bêtise des Anglais, l'avarice des Français, la paresse des Espagnols, la vanité des Italiens, la vulgarité des Belges, la petitesse des Suisses, la natalité des Allemands, la sauvagerie des Bulgares, l'épaisseur des Hollandais, les grâces universitaires des Tchécoslovaques, les canailleries des Roumains, l'âpreté des Grecs, l'idéal démocratique des Portugais, l'inutilité des Norvégiens, la gymnastique des Suédois, l'ingratitude des Yougoslaves, la légèreté des Autrichiens, la méchanceté des Hongrois, la susceptibilité des Polonais.*¹²³

The writer then replies to this in a manner that perhaps excuses or justifies his use of stereotypes. Morand obviously considers stereotypes to be an important matter as he consecrates such a lengthy exchange uniquely to this subject. The writer replies as follows:

...Ou le contraire, madame. Les rêves, dit-on, sont soumis à la loi des contraires. Or, l'écriture n'est qu'un rêve ; cherchez et vous trouverez. Vous verrez soudain, sous ma plume, apparaître la générosité des Russes, la ténacité des Anglais, le jansénisme

¹²³ Morand, *L'Europe galante*, “*Céleste Julie*”. [In terms of marvels, you take it upon yourself to show us the epilepsy of the Russians, the stupidity of the English, the laziness of the Spanish, the vanity of the Italians, the vulgarity of the Belgians, the pettiness of the Swiss, the birth rate of the Germans, the wildness of the Bulgarians, the thickness of the Dutch, the university graces of the Czechoslovakians, the crookedness of the Romanians, the bitterness of the Greeks, the democratic ideals of the Portuguese, the uselessness of the Norwegians, the gymnastics of the Swedes, the ingratitude of the Yugoslavians, the frivolity of the Austrians, the nastiness of the Hungarians, the sensitivity of the Polish].

*des Français, le bon sens des Belges, l'altitude des Suisses, la force des Allemands, le savoir des Tchécoslovaques, le courage des Bulgares, l'économie des Grecs, le parisianisme des Roumains, le don d'oubli des Autrichiens, la francophilie des Portugais, le panache des Italiens, etc, et, surtout, la sympathie d'un auteur sans cœur pour ce qui est vivant, sans parler de son admiration pour vous, madame.*¹²⁴

Morand's meta-literary comment showing how he can craft an idea of a nation with his pen alone is a strong point in favour of my argument regarding the importance of literature, and more specifically narratives of travel, in constructing our perception of national and supranational identities.

Zweig and Theroux also both reinforce national stereotypes in their narratives, but without the same meta-narrative awareness that is shown in Morand's writing. In describing his meeting with a Russian sculptor in Florence in *The World of Yesterday*, Zweig writes: "I arrived punctually at four, forgetting that she was, after all, a Russian, so time and punctuality meant nothing to her".¹²⁵ Zweig also refers unashamedly to "the reserved, stiff upper-lip attitude generally displayed by the British with such virtuoso skill".¹²⁶ In a similar manner, Theroux writes of "Corsicans themselves [who...] are tremendous generalizers"¹²⁷ and of typical Galicians: "I looked at the florid triumphant face of this Galician. He was said to have

¹²⁴ Morand, *L'Europe galante*, "Céleste Julie". [... Or the opposite, *Madame*. Dreams, they say, are subject to the law of opposites. Writing, therefore, is but a dream; look and you will see. You will see, all of a sudden, flowing from my pen, the generosity of the Russians, the tenacity of the English, the Jansenism of the French, the common sense of the Belgians, the altitude of the Swiss, the strength of the Germans, the knowledge of the Czechoslovakians, the bravery of the Bulgarians, the economy of the Greeks, the Parisianism of the Romanians, the gift of forgetting of the Austrians, the francophilia of the Portuguese, the panache of the Italians, etc., and, most of all, the sympathy of a heartless author for all that is living, without mentioning his admiration for you yourself, *Madame*].

¹²⁵ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "Brightness and Shadows over Europe".

¹²⁶ Ibid., "The Death Throes of Peace".

¹²⁷ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 144.

all the Galician traits – above all, Galicians were inexplicable and enigmatic”.¹²⁸ Theroux uses his narrative to note that stereotyping is an inevitable process in identity construction that is thus practised by all national groups. During his conversation with a group of Syrians, Theroux ascertains that the Syrians refer to Turks as ‘Mustache’, Egyptians as ‘Take-your-watch’, Jordanians as ‘they-only-see-themselves’, and Israelis as ‘the sun shines out of their arseholes’ or “arseholes for short”.¹²⁹

Nevertheless, Theroux’s narrative *The Pillars of Hercules* overtly challenges nation-centred identity construction through his portrayal of the impact of the advances of technology and globalisation on one’s rapport with the nation. Theroux claims that much of Europe’s culture has been influenced by America, mentioning with some amusement, that all the Croats he meets only want to talk of the NBA basketball scores. Despite his disparagement of the idea that Europe should be influenced by the USA, Theroux shows that national borders no longer restrict the flow of knowledge and ideas in our increasingly globalised society. Theroux writes that “the earth is often perceived as a foolproof Google map -- not very large, easily accessible and knowable by any finger-drumming geek with a computer. In some respects, this is true. Distance is no longer a problem”.¹³⁰ With the ease of travel that is particular relevant in the context of the later twentieth century in which Theroux is writing, *The Pillars of Hercules* shows that it is becoming increasingly easier to

¹²⁸ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 42.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 419. Theroux challenges his readers by confronting them with common stereotypes. To what end does he present these stereotypes to his readers? Claudio Magris explains in *Danubio* that: “*La vera letteratura non è quella che lusinga il lettore, confermandolo nei suoi pregiudizi e nelle sue sicurezze, bensì quella che lo incalza e lo pone in difficoltà, che lo costringe a rifare i conti col suo mondo e con le sue certezze. Non sarebbe male se chi inclina a ritenere “semi-uomini” i propri vicini prendesse la penna [...] solo per scrivere il proprio autografo*” [True literature does not pander to the reader and confirm his prejudices and his self-assurances. Instead, it pursues him and puts him in the difficult situation of having to reposition himself in the world and challenge his certainties. It would not be a bad idea if those that consider their neighbours to be ‘half-men’ were to take up a pen [...] and attempt to write their own autobiography]. Claudio Magris, *Danubio* (Garzanti, 1990), “Kyselak”, Chapter 10. Translation from the Italian my own, Rhian Collings (2016).

¹³⁰ Paul Theroux, “Why we travel” (New York Times, 3 April 2011), Academic OneFile, Web. 13 April 2015.

reach beyond one's own national borders in constructing one's sense of belonging. For Anthony Pagden, the process of identity construction makes understandably slow if tangible progress, but he too acknowledges that this progress is inevitably sped up by the technological advances that Theroux describes. As Pagden notes, "one can detect a very gradual transition from a Europe of competing and frequently hostile nations to a 'Union' of people".¹³¹

The emphasis that Pagden places on the gradual nature of this transition is mirrored in the way in which these narratives of travel are caught between endorsing an allegiance to one's own nation and an allegiance to Europe. These authors have thus been seen to use their narratives to encourage their readers to rethink their relationship with their nation as part of a collective European whole. As is obvious in all of the narratives in question, but is discussed particularly poignantly in Levi's *I sommersi e i salvati*, a love for Europe must logically stem first of all from a love for one's own village, town, region, country and nation.

Going Beyond the Promotion of a National Identity, and Sharing a Love for Europe's 'Union in Diversity'

In this section, I will show how the writers all reach beyond national borders to celebrate Europe's 'union in diversity', in much the same way that Zweig writes of Switzerland as a microcosm for Europe.¹³² As he points out very explicitly: "My ideas have always been European and not nationalist"¹³³ and he writes at length of his disliking for "the ultimate

¹³¹ Woodrow Wilson, *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 32.

¹³² He suggests that Europe ought to take Switzerland as "an example to the rest of our confused continent of Europe [as a country that] raise[s] linguistic and national differences to a sense of fraternity".

¹³³ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "Out into the World Again".

pestilence that has poisoned the flower of our European culture, nationalism in general”.¹³⁴ Since these authors regard nationalism as just one modality of identity construction, they must therefore present their readers with an alternative model in their narratives. In this section, I will discuss how the narratives in question promote Europe’s *e pluribus unum* (plurality in unity), through their discussion of the international union of the European intellectual elite.

All four authors portray European unity from their privileged position within the social sphere of the intellectual elite, and perhaps none so much so as Paul Morand. Morand takes pride in mixing only with the upper class society of Europe and limits himself to portraying the life of “*une aristocratie du plaisir*”¹³⁵ [an aristocracy of pleasure] or “*des gens très riches*” [very rich people], in the words of the character of Francine in *L’Europe galante*.¹³⁶ Morand acknowledges that international exchange undoubtedly exists “*entre esprits d’élite*” [amongst the spirits of the elite], but goes little further in his conceptualisation of the ensuing responsibility of the elite.¹³⁷ Zweig, on the other hand, considers his privileged position within the intellectual elite as being more than just to his own personal advantage. In fact, Zweig sees his position within the European network of intellectuals as a point of great responsibility, in much the same way as his dear friend Rolland.

Zweig praises Rolland’s conceptualisation of the role and responsibility of the elite and, consequently, makes it clear that he shares his friend’s ideals.¹³⁸ Zweig’s description of Rolland’s novel *Jean-Christophe* is emblematic: “Here at last was a work serving not just one

¹³⁴ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, Foreword.

¹³⁵ Fogel, *Morand-Express*, Chap. 3.

¹³⁶ Morand, *L’Europe galante*, “Les Plaisirs Rhénans”.

¹³⁷ Paul Morand, *Rien que la terre* (Les Cahiers Verts, Ohio State University, 1926), 127.

¹³⁸ Prochnik, *The Impossible Exile*, Introduction.

European nation, but all of them and the fraternal connection between them [...] this was the first consciously European novel being written at the time, the first vital call for fraternity".¹³⁹ Zweig also describes Rolland's inclusive pacifist essay *Au-dessus de la mêlée* as "remarkable" and recognises Rolland "as the man who would be the conscience of Europe in its time of crisis".¹⁴⁰

Indeed, Rolland classifies himself as being more European than French: "*Je crains bien de devenir européen, avant d'être français*" [I do fear that I am becoming firstly European, before being French].¹⁴¹ This converges with Zweig's attitude towards the importance of maintaining allegiance to Europe through international friendships during wartime:

I addressed all my friends in other countries, saying that I would be loyal to them even if closer links were impossible at the moment, so that at the first opportunity I could go on working with them to encourage the construction of a common European culture.¹⁴²

Both of these writers see intellectuals as having a key responsibility in forming public opinion and Rolland stresses the importance of intellectuals not displaying anti-European thought, as he writes in *Littérature de Guerre* [Literature of War] with regard to the necessity of "*ne pas 'saccager' [...] avec leur plume, l'avenir européen*"¹⁴³ [not destroying [...] the future of Europe with their pens].

¹³⁹ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "Brightness and Shadows over Europe".

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., "The Fight for International Fraternity", "Brightness and Shadows over Europe".

¹⁴¹ Unpublished correspondence between Rolland and Cruppi, from the *Fonds Romain Rolland* at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* (call number: MS 6862, letter number 87, Thursday 12th January 1911).

¹⁴² Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "The Fight for International Fraternity".

¹⁴³ Romain Rolland, *Au-dessus de la mêlée*, "Littérature de Guerre" (1915), 2.

Prochnik notes that Zweig is part of a “community of elite global citizens” and clearly describes his position as “inspired by the dream of pan-Europeanism on a humanist model, to be achieved through peaceful, transnational understanding and ruled over by an elite assembly of global scholars”.¹⁴⁴ For Zweig, the arts are a ‘safe space’, in which national and linguistic borders lose all relevance, and thus the arts create his envisaged “ideal of peaceful understanding and intellectual brotherhood crossing linguistic and national borders”.¹⁴⁵ Writing of an international group of poets, for example, Zweig states that: “One lived in Germany, another in France, yet another in Italy, but they all inhabited the same homeland, for they really lived only in their poetry”.¹⁴⁶ As he expresses so eloquently in *Appello agli Europei*, “*al di sopra dell’Europa geografica è sempre visibile un’Europa dallo spirito*” [above and beyond geographical Europe, a Europe of the Spirit can always be seen] and it is precisely this intellectual unity of Europe that Zweig demonstrates in his example of the union of the German, French and Italian poets, and he encourages his readers to work towards such achievement.¹⁴⁷

In *L’unificazione dell’Europa* [The Unification of Europe], written in 1935 while Zweig was living in London, the author showcases his idea that, despite its importance in conflict resolution during the interwar period, European identity is still a difficult concept to grasp, since it is far easier to identify with “selfish nationalism” than “altruistic Europeanism”. In addition, Zweig notes that debates and conferences only touch a tiny portion of Europeans, and often these are the ones that already believe in the European project. Hence Zweig believes that he needs to diffuse his ideas outside the “*sfera esoterica delle discussioni*

¹⁴⁴ Prochnik, *The Impossible Exile*, Introduction.

¹⁴⁵ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “Brightness and Shadows over Europe”.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., “Paris, the City of Eternal Youth”.

¹⁴⁷ I must point out that I am using the Italian translation, since no English translation yet exists from the original German. All English translations from the Italian are my own, Rhian Collings (2016).

intellettuali" [the esoteric sphere of intellectual discussions] and obtain more "visibility", despite the fact that he was already, by nature, an intellectual who was very much in touch with his audience, and successfully reached out to the masses, as his wide-scale popularity shows.¹⁴⁸

Theroux too is clearly part of the intellectual elite and uses *The Pillars of Hercules* to follow in the footsteps of the great intellectuals of the past, as can be seen in his frequent references to many European and American authors that travelled around Europe whilst writing their works of fiction and travel accounts in the past. He uses the work of Joyce to enhance his visit to Trieste and claims that he was "delighted to be able to guide [him]self through the city by using a novel that was almost a hundred years old".¹⁴⁹ Amusingly, Theroux occupies a liminal position at the boundary between the elite world of European intellectuals and the growing backpacking culture of the 90s. In Arles, for example, he chooses his hotel in a manner that is very inconsistent with a member of the cultural elite as conceived by Morand or Zweig: "Arles had three or four large luxury hotels, but I was put off by their ridiculous prices. I had found the name of a twenty-dollar hotel in a guidebook".¹⁵⁰ Contrary to Morand and Zweig, Theroux seems to be deliberately trying to escape his intellectual heritage.

Zweig's love for Europe is often expressed in seemingly negative, nostalgic terms. His biographer Prochnik describes a meeting between Zweig and the journalist Brainin in New York in *The Impossible Exile*. Upon interviewing Zweig, Brainin understood that when Europe "began to split up into little cubicles," the writer "suffered the pain of physical

¹⁴⁸ This resonates particularly with Pagden's European theory, who also believed in the need for increased 'visibility'. Pagden (1945-) writes that "the difficulty in actual practice is that all the attempts to "construct Europe", and with it a notion of European citizenship, have been the work of elites – elites composed of 'experts' whose work has generally been conducted behind closed doors". Wilson, *The Idea of Europe*, 26.

¹⁴⁹ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 223.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 87.

dismemberment” because the Europe that he loved was being destroyed by the political upheaval of World War II.¹⁵¹

Even Morand, writing before the rise of Fascism in *Rien que la terre* in 1925, describes his sentimental attachment to the “*Europe devenue si laide, mais notre mère*” [Europe become so ugly, but still our mother], in a way that converges with the nostalgia of Zweig’s writings about his beloved Europe.¹⁵² Morand counteracts any doubters that he meets during his travels who believe it to be “*la fin des privilèges de la race blanche, la décrépitude de l’Europe*” [the end of the privileges of the Whites, the decrepitude of Europe], with the argument that all that Europe is reproached for is, in fact, “*des phénomènes de croissance*” [phenomena of its development].¹⁵³ According to Morand, this striving towards development is what differentiates Europe from “*les pays qui croulent et ne savent pas rebâtir*” [countries that fall apart and do not know how to rebuild themselves].¹⁵⁴ Morand differs from Zweig here in his conceptualisation of the countries outside Europe as being inferior to European nations. In contrast to Morand’s characterisation of other continents in *Rien que la terre* that are portrayed as being somewhat backwards, Zweig’s final book, in fact, refers to his land of exile, Brazil, as being “the land of the future”. Zweig’s belief that Europe is not the only place where one can be civilised and forward-thinking can be interpreted in light of the historical context in which he was writing, where Europe and any ideas of European union had fallen so far that it seemed difficult to imagine how to pick up the pieces of a collective identity in tatters.

In *Rien que la terre*, for example, Morand also shows that he has given deep thought to the question of what it means to be part of an integrated European identity. His narrative

¹⁵¹ Prochnik, *The Impossible Exile*, Chapter II.

¹⁵² Morand, *Rien que la terre*, 251.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 251, 252.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 252.

deals specifically with the lack of international cooperation in Europe in the interwar period. Morand uses the example of France and England to show quite how disconnected and distant two countries can be that are only separated by “*trois quarts d’heure de mer*” [three quarters of an hour at sea]. He describes France and England as being “*aussi éloignés que la Perse l’est des Antilles*” [as far apart as Persia and the Antilles]: two places that, despite having shed blood together fighting for the same cause during World War I, feel only “*ignorance et mépris*” [ignorance and contempt] for each other.¹⁵⁵ Interestingly, Morand, does not blame Britain for this, but accepts instead that both countries ought to have a sense of mutual responsibility for this situation. As a Frenchman, he thus implicitly self-criticises his own nation and acknowledges that we must move beyond this ignorance of the other in order to create a sense of collective belonging.

In contrast, before the crumbling of his beloved Europe and his ensuing exile, Zweig promotes a sense of a European ‘family of nations’ by using Europe’s cities as specific examples of multicultural meeting grounds. In his description of Vienna, he writes that, during the Hapsburg Empire, “unconsciously every citizen of Vienna also became a supranational, cosmopolitan citizen of the world”.¹⁵⁶ In this vein, Zweig describes Vienna as a city in which intellectuals and artists from different countries come together to celebrate a transcendental “love for culture” that goes beyond national differences.¹⁵⁷ The author acknowledges that his upbringing in a cosmopolitan city is what allowed him to conceptualise the European community in such embracing terms: “Nowhere was it easier to be a European, and I know

¹⁵⁵ Morand, *Rien que la terre*, 13.

¹⁵⁶ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “The World of Security”. This resonates with the political theories exposed by Habermas in *The Post-National Constellation: Political Essays*, where he claims that to form a post-national democracy, “political communities [must] form a collective identity beyond national borders”. Jürgen Habermas, *The Post-National Constellation: Political Essays* (Wiley, 2000), 90.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., “The World of Security”.

that in part I have to thank Vienna [...] for the fact that I learnt early to love the idea of community as the highest ideal of my heart".¹⁵⁸ Paris served as another cosmopolitan living space in *The World of Yesterday* to enforce the idea that a place is home not only to those who were born there: "Chinese and Scandinavians, Spaniards and Greeks, Brazilians and Canadians, we all felt at home on the banks of the Seine".¹⁵⁹ Recalling a conversation with André Gide,¹⁶⁰ Zweig notes how Gide feels that foreigners almost seem to know Paris better than the French, thus showing to what extent these 'foreigners' have become an integrated part of the international and multicultural community of Paris, which functions once again as a microcosm of a supra-national Europe.¹⁶¹

If we move to the post World War II period and to the conceptualisation of Europe that Levi offers in the aftermath of his ordeal, his narratives can be seen to illustrate his belief in European identity as a 'union in diversity'. After Auschwitz, Levi shows that the European peoples are united by the horrors of the war that they have lived through together: a war that Levi describes as a European phenomenon involving all of the countries of Europe and whose termination is celebrated by groups of *Europeans* and not by compartmentalised national groups.¹⁶² Even during his time in the concentration camps, Levi shows his readers that he believes that the community of the Lager is "a common sample of humanity",¹⁶³ considering primarily what unites the human race rather than the factors that separate it into restrictive

¹⁵⁸ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "The World of Security".

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., "Paris, the City of Eternal Youth".

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Zygmunt Bauman underlines the importance of 'foreigners' or migrants in deconstructing our preconceptions about national identity in *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*. Bauman describes the 'crisis of belonging' that migrants bring to the foreground with their very presence that is similar to what Zweig describes here. For more information, see Bauman: *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*, (University of Leeds and Warsaw, 2004).

¹⁶² Levi, *La tregua*, 144, 107.

¹⁶³ Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 87. Levi further highlights that mankind is a single race (71): "The conviction that life has a purpose is rooted in every fibre of man, it is a property of the human substance".

national categories. Linguistic and national differences are of little importance in this atrocious new community, where “thousands of individuals differing in age, condition, origin, language, culture and customs, are enclosed within barbed wire”, since they are all living “a regular, controlled life, which is identical for all”.¹⁶⁴

This perception of the human race as one united and equal body persists in Levi’s description of the aftermath of the camps in *La tregua*. As the survivors are slowly repatriated, they pass through a series of transit camps. Flury writes of how this “entangled body of people struggle and strive to situate themselves”, forging a “community on the move”.¹⁶⁵ For example, Levi’s description of the heterogeneous community of the transit camp in Staryje Doroghi as that of a community diverse in sex, race, colour, nationality and religion, fully reveals how these camps were successful melting pots of European languages and cultures.¹⁶⁶ In his account of the Katowice transit camp, Levi even goes so far as to refer to the group of survivors as the “*popolazione*”¹⁶⁷ [population] of the camp, thus grouping together “*parlatori di tutte le lingue di Europa*” [speakers of all the languages of Europe] as a multilingual and multinational community.¹⁶⁸ Levi describes the temporary communities of the transit camps in very positive terms, as forming “*una stagione unica nella [sua] esistenza*” [a unique period of [his] life], where the people and peoples encountered “*[gli] stavano nel cuore*” [stayed in [his] heart].¹⁶⁹ Levi shows how the survivors of Auschwitz are aware that the only way to survive the aftermath of the camps is to collaborate, by embracing the ‘other’ and creating cross-national friendships. In the Staryje Doroghi transit camp, for example, the men and

¹⁶⁴ Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 87.

¹⁶⁵ Flury, *Discovering ‘Europe’*, 65.

¹⁶⁶ Levi, *La tregua*, 150.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 218.

women prefer to share a room: “*una situazione meno intima ma più sicura*” [a less intimate but safer option].¹⁷⁰ The safety of sharing a room in this case serves to protect the women from the advances of the lustful Russian soldiers, but Levi provides us with several other examples in *La tregua* of international collaboration that has a less obvious immediate goal. Indeed, in Iasi in Romania, Italian and Romanian Jews form a mutually aiding community in the form of a help centre that defies national borders and Levi also describes how Hungarian Pista works willingly and diligently in an Italian aid camp.¹⁷¹

International solidarity is also shown in relationships between individuals and not only in group partnerships. Through Levi’s portrayal of his alliance with the Greek, Mordo Nahum, he shows how Nahum is prepared to help a man weaker than himself by sharing his extensive, gruff advice and with the practical aid of “*due pezzi di tela robusta*” [two pieces of robust cloth] that Levi subsequently uses to craft himself some rudimentary footwear.¹⁷² In a time where resources are hard to come by, Nahum’s albeit grudging sharing of his possessions is praiseworthy. Levi’s narrative is precise and factual in nature, but the mere fact that he mentions this division of materials is enough; any discerning reader will comprehend the magnanimity of Nahum’s gesture. Levi also takes great care in recounting another partnership between individuals, this time between Hungarian Henek and the *nulla* child, Hurbinek, who was born and raised in Auschwitz. In the period immediately following the closing of the camps, Levi observes the relationship that grows between Henek and Hurbinek from his hospital bed in the room that they share. Selflessly, Henek “*gli portava da mangiare, gli*

¹⁷⁰ Levi, *La tregua*, 205.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 230, 253.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 46.

rassettava le coperte, lo ripuliva con mani abili" [brought him food to eat, adjusted his blankets, cleaned him with skilful hands].¹⁷³

Levi shows that these moments of "*spontanea umanità*" [spontaneous humanity] exist not only in the aftermath of the camps, but also within the camps themselves.¹⁷⁴ In *Se questo è un uomo*, Levi describes his encounter with the Hungarian dentist upon his arrival in the Lager. The new Italian inmates are bewildered at how quickly they must come to terms with this horrific new world and are grateful that the dentist appears of his own free will to explain to the new detainees all that he can about the running of the Lager. Levi writes that the Hungarian came "*perché gli sono simpatici gli italiani e perché, dice, "ha un po' di cuore"*" [because he ha[d] a liking for Italians, and because, he [the Hungarian] says, '*has a little heart*'] (Italics mine).¹⁷⁵ Levi explains how the Hungarian man's gesture is particularly significant in the context of Auschwitz, since he was defying the rules of the camp at his own risk. This episode proves that the Germans did not fully succeed in quashing all sense of humanity in all of the inmates, although the rest of *Se questo è un uomo* leaves its readers in no doubt that the Hungarian dentist was more fortunate than most of the prisoners in the Nazi Lagers.

In his narratives, Levi writes not only of embracing the 'other' in a general sense, but also more specifically of embracing the German 'other'. This is particularly meaningful, since the German 'other' was inevitably negatively charged after the war. Levi's portrayal in *La tregua* of his and Cesare's encounter with an old German lady in her shop near Katowice shows no consideration for the animosity that is almost expected to exist between survivors and their German 'oppressors' – after all, this woman bore no responsibility. Levi illustrates

¹⁷³ Levi, *La tregua*, 23.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 50.

¹⁷⁵ Levi, *Se questo è un uomo*, 28.

how the woman is, at first, brusque and mistrusting of them, but upon hearing that they are Jews from Auschwitz, “*allora era un'altra faccenda*” [well, that changed things].¹⁷⁶ The woman suddenly alters her attitude and urges them to sit down, to drink her beer and eat her food, and, in perhaps her most notable display of trust and comradeship, she invites the Italians to listen to her stories of her own encounters with Nazism. In a small shop in Poland, Levi shows how an innate bond can exist between people of different nationalities, in this case between representatives of Italy and Germany. Indeed, Levi’s inclusion of this episode in his narrative shows that he has maintained the emotional and rational capacity that allows him to distinguish between his German oppressors in the camps and this German shopkeeper.

Beyond Eurocentrism: Europe from the Outside

In order to perceive what Kraus and Cacciari truly believe that it means to be European – where “*l’armonia proviene dal [...] differire delle parti*” [harmony comes from [...] the difference between the parts]¹⁷⁷, it will become clear that, to perceive this very European-ness, one must, in fact, go one step beyond the nation and Europe itself, to see European identity as just one step on the way towards envisaging a globally inclusive identity.¹⁷⁸ Since three of the four writers in question were all excluded from belonging to Europe in some way, their perspective of what it means to be European is particularly poignant, as will be seen in the ensuing paragraphs. In the twentieth century, when a seemingly never-ending succession

¹⁷⁶ Levi, *La tregua*, 127.

¹⁷⁷ Massimo Cacciari, *Geofilosofia dell’Europa* (Adelphi, 1994), 132.

¹⁷⁸ This is an idea that is much discussed by Habermas, as will be dealt with in the ‘Europe is Just the Beginning’ section of this dissertation.

of wars was narrowing the mind-set of many Europeans, the writings of Morand, Zweig, Levi and Theroux aim to reach beyond this caging of the European mind.

By way of example, let us examine the way in which Dr. B is forced to think narrowly in Zweig's *A Chess Story*, and has to harness his mind with the constant replaying of chess games as a survival technique. This mirrors the situation in which Zweig and his wife found themselves whilst in exile in Brazil, where they were largely deprived of books and entertainment. They themselves also turned to chess as a pastime, which undoubtedly represented a narrowing of their horizons. Perhaps these restricted horizons, which were present both in Zweig's own life at the time and that of his protagonist in *A Chess Story*, could signify his outlook on the impact of the World Wars on Europe as a whole: how closed- or narrow- mindedness leads to an inevitable loss of identity construction on a Europe-wide scale. This sensation of 'narrowing' that he describes through the experiences of Dr. B could interconnect with Levi's description of how caging his mind was a method he used in order to keep his sanity in the concentration camps by focussing on simple daily tasks in order to prevent oneself musing on one's existential condition.

As Pagden notes in *The Idea of Europe*, Europe is sometimes difficult to conceptualise from the inside:

Viewed from Europe, there may be no such thing as a 'European culture'. Viewed from Japan there clearly is. What the new Europe must generate is a sense of belonging that retains the Japanese eye-view, a sense of belonging that can perceive diversity while giving allegiance to that which is shared.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ Wilson, *The Idea of Europe*, 24.

This phenomenon is equally evident in the fact that it is possible to read ‘European Studies’ at universities in North America, whereas one would struggle to find a similarly broad and inclusive course within the borders of Europe itself. It is thus interesting to note that three of the four authors in question who conceptualise Europe so openly, so inclusively, are very clearly outsiders from or in the very Europe they revere. Zweig was a Jewish exile in Brazil, whose books were censored and even destroyed under the Third Reich; Levi, a Jewish inmate in Auschwitz, the liminal ‘non-place’ from which he looked back at Europe; and Theroux, an American expatriate living in the United Kingdom. One must nevertheless distinguish between the position of Zweig and Levi – as outsiders against their will – and Theroux, who chose of his own volition to leave behind his native land of America and live in Europe for 25 years of his life.

In this vein, one can also consider Morand as having occupied the position of outsider, since he chooses to travel widely beyond Europe during his lifetime. Morand’s texts undoubtedly convey a deep-rooted allegiance to Europe when seen from the outside, as Fogel explains in his biography in this snippet of Morand speaking during his travels in Tanger, Morocco: “*Je me prive d’elle [de l’Europe] pour mieux, d’ici, la contempler, je la regarde avec tendresse*” [I deprive myself of her [of Europe] in order to see her better from here. I look at her with tenderness].¹⁸⁰ It is, in fact, this stepping beyond the limits of Europe that helps Morand to better understand the shared culture that he has left behind. Morand’s privileged position as a traveller allows him to realise that, seen from this new perspective, Europe is but a “*curieux et minuscule spectacle vu du dehors*” [curious and minuscule spectacle seen from without]. With this opening of his horizons, Morand shows an awareness of the vast

¹⁸⁰ Fogel, *Morand-Express*, Chap. 3.

world that exists outside his own country and continent. Curiously, in *Rien que la terre*, Morand views all the countries that he visits through a European lens, or what he refers to as “*l’œil européen*” [the European eye]; everything must be compared to European culture and customs in order to be understood.¹⁸¹

Not only does Europe become a central theme for Morand in his using it as a standard to understand the non-European places that he visits, but it also functions as an englobing identity that goes beyond national borders, as is shown in Morand’s regular use of the adjective ‘European’ rather than nation-centred adjectives such as ‘French’, ‘German’ or ‘English’. Morand describes “*ces chauffeurs qui font marcher notre vapeur*” [these workers on our steam-boat] as “*des Européens*” [Europeans]; these workers are European to Morand in opposition to the local Chinese.¹⁸² Similarly, Morand writes of “*la conversation européenne*” [European conversation] and describes the gatherings of European people abroad as “*tous ces Européens comme une seule famille*” [all these Europeans like one single family].¹⁸³ This conceptualisation of the shared values of Europe is, of course, only possible because Morand has taken a step beyond Europe’s borders.

Likewise, Zweig deals overtly in *The World of Yesterday* with the necessity of becoming an outsider in order to understand one’s own culture. When writing of his younger self before the rise of Nazism, Zweig states: “I owe Rathenau his suggestion that I should look beyond Europe. [...] “You can’t understand our continent until you have gone beyond it at least once””.¹⁸⁴ With this critical distance during his enforced exile in Brazil, Zweig notes that

¹⁸¹ Morand, *Rien que la terre*, 13. For example, the prairies of Alberta in Canada are so large that they could fit “*deux Hongries et quatre Roumanies mises bout à bout*” [two Hungaries and two Romanias placed end to end]. Ibid., 17.

¹⁸² Ibid., 83.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 35.

¹⁸⁴ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “Detours on the Way to Myself”.

“Europe no longer seemed [...] the eternal axis of the universe”.¹⁸⁵ With the physical distance that he puts between himself and his continent, Zweig is able to reach the realisation that, although he may have lost his sense of belonging to his native country due to his exile, he can still belong to and identify with a wider community. Zweig writes in the foreword of *The World of Yesterday*: “I am no longer organically bound to my native land and I never really fit into any other”, but adds in the final chapter: “I was sure in my heart from the first of my identity as a citizen of the world”.¹⁸⁶ In this way, Zweig shows that he understands the role that his culture plays within the global network of cultures, without giving his own roots a preferential place in this network, but instead seeing them as an integral part of the whole.

Theroux, on the other hand, uses his position as an outsider to somewhat different ends and, rather than singing the praises of Europe from a distance, he prefers to concentrate instead on pointing out the unpleasant truths about Europe, the awkward truths that are too uncomfortable to be noted by insiders. In *The Pillars of Hercules*, Theroux writes:

The Frenchmen who talked about the Romans would be evasive when the subject of the German occupation was raised. Israelis might not be happy talking about something that occurred in South Lebanon last year. There was a book to be written about Mediterranean notions of time.¹⁸⁷

Theroux goes on to point out that in Italy, mentioning the name of Mussolini in polite company “was immeasurably worse than farting”.¹⁸⁸ As an outsider, Theroux thus notes Europe’s desire to bury its less than laudable past and shows that Europeans are clearly not

¹⁸⁵ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “Detours on the Way to Myself”.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., “Foreword”, “The First Hours of the 1914 War”.

¹⁸⁷ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 71.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 180.

yet ready to discuss the political upheavals of the twentieth century with foreigners. Theroux also uses his presence as an outsider within Europe to mention that which one might prefer to gloss over and ignore:

The Mediterranean, this simple, almost tideless sea the size of thirty Lake Superiors, had everything: prosperity, poverty, tourism, terrorism, several wars in progress, ethnic strife, fascists, pollution, drift-nets, private islands owned by billionaires, gypsies, seventeen countries, fifty languages, oil-drilling platforms, sponge fishermen, religious fanatics, drug smuggling, fine art, and warfare. It had Christians, Muslims, Jews; it had the Druzes who are a strange farrago on all three religions; it had heathens, Zoroastrians and Copts and Bahias.¹⁸⁹

Despite this bizarre conceptualisation of Europe and the Mediterranean – one must not be beguiled by Theroux’s caustically ironic writing style – Theroux shows the arbitrary nature of European borders. For example, let us examine his description of the Mediterranean Sea:

Continuous and unchanging, the simultaneous calm in eighteen countries, and those aqueous and indistinct borders, made it seem like a small world of nations, cheek by jowl, with their chins in the water. And it was so calm I could imagine myself trespassing, from one to the other.¹⁹⁰

Hence Theroux sees borders as “indistinct” and easy to trespass across, leading him to state that “that feeling of being at the edge of the sea [...] obliterated any clear idea of nationhood”.¹⁹¹ Theroux thus encourages his readers to see Europe as a flexible entity in

¹⁸⁹ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 7.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

which territorial borders hold little or no importance. In fact, the only significance of European national borders for an international traveller like Theroux is as a mere nuisance, as can be seen in how he views border checks as a frustration due to excessive and, as his comment implies, unnecessary nationalism: “this was one of the irritations of nationalism [...] every few miles a passport check, just a ritual, at the frontier of another tinkly-winky republic”.¹⁹²

While Theroux writes as a free man in 1995, Zweig also uses his narrative to forward the idea that borders are arbitrary and are, in his own words, “nothing but symbolic lines on the map”.¹⁹³ He underlines the random nature of the placing of national borders, particularly in times of conflict: “I could not help wondering whether the fish on the right bank of this little river at the border were also at war, while the fish on the left bank were neutral”.¹⁹⁴ In fact, in his article, *Disintossicazione morale dell’Europa* [Moral Detox of Europe]¹⁹⁵, Zweig tackles how a nation tells its own history, and how each nation inevitably represents bordering countries as the wrongdoers in order to justify their own acts. Consequently, in his true all-embracing fashion, Zweig claims that we need to change the way we teach history, shifting the emphasis from teaching about wars and conflicts and the placing of borders, to teaching about the unique cultural heritage of neighbouring countries. This teaching should not limit itself to the past, but should also detail modern-day creative developments in other European countries and should encourage inter-European university exchanges that cross borders.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 228.

¹⁹³ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “The Death Throes of Peace”.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., “In the Heart of Europe”.

¹⁹⁵ Once again, I must point out that I am using the Italian translation, since no English translation yet exists from the original German.

¹⁹⁶ Not only in his autobiography and in his critical essays, but also in his works of fiction, Zweig, like all of the four authors in question, uses his narratives to portray characters that move between countries and cross national borders in their travels, thus allowing him to break down the importance of these very borders.

Morand also uses his narratives, particularly *Rien que la terre*, to deal with the concept of the arbitrary nature of the artificial lines that separate land into countries, and even continents. Morand states that “*on pouvait fixer la frontière entre l’Asie et l’Europe en bien d’autres points qu’à l’Oural*” [we could put the border between Asia and Europe in many other places instead of the Urals].¹⁹⁷ Even the very title of the work, *Rien que la terre* [Nothing but the Earth], suggests his opposition to humanity’s inherent desire to separate and categorise. It is hence no surprise that, in 1932, Ernst Robert Curtius described Morand’s writing as “*brouillant les cultures et les continents*” [mixing cultures and continents].¹⁹⁸ Many years later, in 1980, Morand’s biographer Fogel also describes Morand as a natural traveller who is “*partout chez lui et moquant les frontières, [qui] n’a ni patrie, ni époque*” [at home everywhere and mocking borders, [who] has no homeland and no era].¹⁹⁹

The author whose narrative makes the most dramatic statement concerning the creation of an all-embracing European identity is, undoubtedly, Theroux. Theroux’s use of the word ‘Mediterranean’ rather than ‘European’ takes the subversion of national boundaries to a new level.²⁰⁰ Theroux’s own description of his traveling style as being “a quest for detail, conversation as a form of ambush, the traveller as an agent of provocation”²⁰¹ matches his *osé* espousal of Europe’s Eastern ‘other’. Indeed, the emphasis that he places on the inclusion of North Africa in his conception of Europe is immediately evident even in the choice of the title of his work. ‘*The Pillars of Hercules*’ is a reference to ancient Greek mythology, when this expression was used to describe the Straits of Gibraltar, which were previously considered to

¹⁹⁷ Morand, *Rien que la terre*, 24.

¹⁹⁸ Curtius, *Essai sur la littérature française*, 23.

¹⁹⁹ Fogel, *Morand-Express*, Chap. 3.

²⁰⁰ For further information, the idea of a Mediterranean identity is also discussed in detail in Valerio Ferme and Norma Bouchard’s *Italy and the Mediterranean: Words, Sounds and Images of the Post-Cold War Era* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), in which Bouchard writes of the Mediterranean as “an ‘ideal’ of integration and reconciliation” that values the “convergence, rather than a clash of civilisations” (41).

²⁰¹ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 405.

be impassable, treacherous waters. Theroux's choice of title shows that he considers the crossing of these straits as being a key movement in his travels around Europe and North Africa. For instance, he describes the mixing of Western and Eastern cultures in overwhelmingly positive terms – “the Arabesque of Marseilles, loathed and feared by the French, was one of its most interesting and liveliest aspects” – and praises the “cultural bouillabaisse, made up of distinctly Mediterranean ingredients” that he sees in this multicultural French town.²⁰²

Theroux describes the Mediterranean as uniting its Western and Eastern seaside dwellers in a ‘union in diversity’ and writes frequently of the “resemblances, Mediterranean similarities” that exist between European (and non-European) countries.²⁰³ Herein, Theroux takes his readers beyond Eurocentrism and shows us how flexible our concept of Europe can and should be. In line with the view that Waldron expresses in *Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative* that a cultural identity is necessarily made up of many different cultures, Theroux's narrative shows to what extent he believes that one must, in the words of C. Taylor:

Question, first, the assumption that the social world divides up neatly into particular distinct cultures, one to every community, and secondly, the assumption that what everyone needs is just one of these entities – a single, coherent culture – to give meaning to his life.²⁰⁴

²⁰² Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 94, 96.

²⁰³ Ibid., 93, 86, 120.

²⁰⁴ Charles Taylor, *Thinking and Living Deep Diversity* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 128.

Controversially, Theroux denies that Europe can ignore the existence of its external Eastern 'other' and instead challenges Europeans to include the East in their conceptualisation of what it means to be European or, as Theroux posits, 'Mediterranean'.²⁰⁵

Let us return now to the quotation used at the opening of this chapter, in which Theroux speaks with some independentist islanders living in a remote corner of Oceania about their xenophobic attitude of not wanting to share their island with foreigners. Theroux listens politely to their opinions, but then reminds the islanders of the importance of collaborating, of building bridges between different nations and creating unions that transcend our differences. In constructing a modern-day European identity, we would do well to heed Theroux's advice to the islanders that "the more solitary you are, the more vulnerable you will be".²⁰⁶

Once again turning to Theroux by way of example, it is uplifting to see that these four narratives look to the future and leave their readership with hope for the de-/re-/construction of European identity in the economic and political turmoil of the twentieth century. Morand, Zweig, Levi and Theroux, albeit in very different ways and to different extents, all look towards Europe's future, much like the character of Albanian Fatmir in *The Pillars of Hercules*, who says to Theroux: "I hope you will come back in ten years. [...] You will find that the houses are

²⁰⁵ Roberto Dainotto in *Europe (In Theory)* (Duke University Press, 2007), takes a somewhat contrary stance and claims that European identity is not formed as an antithesis to Asia or the East, its external other, but rather it is formed in contrast to its *internal* other: the South, or the PIGS, as Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain have been unsympathetically nicknamed within the European Union. Dainotto thus states that he wishes to "question Eurocentrism not from the outside but from the marginal inside of Europe itself" (4). Unembarrassedly, he admits his desire is to "trouble the tranquil waters of European studies" (4) and his lack of faith in the existence of a true European identity does not, in fact, sit well with my own dissertation that argues my belief in a collective sense of belonging to Europe that includes both the South and the North of Europe on equal footing.

²⁰⁶ Theroux, *Happy Isles of Oceania*, 154.

better, the town is better, the port is better, the food is better, and I am better".²⁰⁷ There is undeniably still much progress to be made, but it is through valuable cultural productions such as these narratives of travel that Europeans are exposed to an alternative and more inclusive mode for identity construction that reaches beyond Europe and to the Mediterranean, and triumphantly forwards Kraus' 'union in diversity'.

IV. Celebrating Difference: Language and European Identity

One does not inhabit a country; one inhabits a language

E. M. Cioran

As Cioran's opening quotation makes clear, one cannot overlook the concept of language in a consideration of what it means to be European; language and linguistic identities are undoubtedly of paramount importance in the construction of a collective European identity. Peter Kraus' inclusive conceptualisation of Europe as a "union in diversity" relates not only to embracing the plurality of Europe's nations, but also to celebrating the plurality of its languages. As cited at the beginning of the UNESCO Atlas of the World's *Languages in Danger* website, "Languages are vehicles of our cultures, collective memory and values. They are an essential component of our identities, and a building block of our diversity and living heritage".²⁰⁸ Language is intimately connected with identity, and we can hardly

²⁰⁷ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 285.

²⁰⁸ For more information, see <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/>.

envision a globalisation of languages into one universal language, as some proponents for the supremacy of the English language would perhaps like to see in the future. Instead, we should be forwarding a model of linguistic inclusion, in which each language is respected and glorified as an integral part of the European linguistic and cultural heritage. As Pierre Bourdieu points out: “Language is more than a shared code of symbols for communication. People do not fight and die [...] to preserve a set of symbols. They do so because they believe that their identity is at stake”.²⁰⁹

As shown in the narratives of Zweig, Levi and Theroux, Europe’s strength is in its diversity, and linguistic diversity is its primary vehicle.²¹⁰ In this chapter, I will examine how these three authors use their role as travellers to transgress what Angela Flury refers to as linguistic “territorial borders”.²¹¹ As they cross linguistic and cultural borders during their travels through Europe, all three writers celebrate the differences between European languages by subverting the traditional paradigms that exist between language and identity, and thus urging their readership to rethink their relationship with language. Their narratives encourage their readers to venture into what is linguistically new and regard it as an enjoyable experience, thus realising the advantages of being multilingual in Europe.²¹² I will analyse the theme of language and European identity in these narratives by discussing how these three authors problematize the relationship between language and identity and how they each

²⁰⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Langage et pouvoir symbolique* (Points Essais, 2001), 44. Translation my own, Rhian Collings (2016).

²¹⁰ The linguistic aspect is less obvious in Paul Morand’s writing, unfortunately, and his narratives will therefore not feature in this chapter. Morand’s narratives deal with European identity from a different angle, but do not specifically touch on issues of multilingualism.

²¹¹ Gilman, *The Special Languages of the Camps*, 92.

²¹² This has been proved in a recent study on German-English bilinguals entitled *Two Languages, Two Minds*, conducted by a group of researchers from the Universities of Newcastle and Chester. Through a series of tests, the study revealed, to quote their abstract, “unprecedented levels of malleability in human cognition” in the minds of those participants that had a mastery of more than one language. Athanasopoulos, Panos, *Two Languages, Two Minds* (Association for Psychological Science, 2015), 1.

exhibit multilingualism as a tool for intercultural communication that promotes inter-lingual and intercultural understanding.

Problematizing the Relationship between Language and Identity

In *Towards a philosophy of language diversity*, David Crystal explains that language has two functions: firstly, intelligibility (making oneself understood) – an outward-looking function, and secondly identity – an “inward-looking” function.²¹³ I will concentrate on how the narratives in question articulate the latter “inward-looking” function.

As Michael Byram states in *Languages and Identities*, “there is often a particularly strong link between language and a sense of belonging to a national group, a sense of national identity. In ‘simple’ cases, there is one ‘national language’, which is spoken by everyone with the same national identity”.²¹⁴ While Byram states an idea that is widely accepted, the three narratives of travel in question make clear to what extent his comment risks to over-simplify this bond. Levi in particular acknowledges the link that undoubtedly exists between national identity and mother tongue, but then uses his narrative to go beyond this paradigm. In *La tregua*, Levi feels united to other Italians thanks to their common linguistic and cultural heritage and writes of the “*dolore dell’esilio*” [the pain of exile] that he suffers during his enforced absence from his homeland.²¹⁵ In this vein, the narrator’s extreme agitation at returning to Italy, unsure of what he will find there, becomes particularly poignant because

²¹³ David Crystal, *Towards a philosophy of language diversity* (Dialogue of Cultures Conference, Reykjavik, 2005), 7.

²¹⁴ In accordance with Byram, Benedict Anderson also states that mother tongue and patriotism are inextricably linked in *Imagined Communities*, 154. Michael Byram, *Languages of Schooling: Towards a framework for Europe Conference* (University of Durham, Strasbourg, 2006), 1.

²¹⁵ Levi, *La tregua*, 14.

he shows how his rapport with his own country and compatriots has been brought into question during his twenty-month exile. Levi reaches out towards other linguistic communities, most notably that of the German language, in order to survive, as can be seen in *I sommersi e i salvati* when he pays another inmate, with bread as currency, to give him German lessons in the evenings.²¹⁶

Given the context of political turmoil in which Levi and Zweig's narratives were written, it is unsurprising that they show how war and unrest can shake up one's linguistic identity, and sometimes irrevocably change the relationship with one's mother tongue. This theme is dealt with in detail by Zweig in *The World of Yesterday*. Zweig describes how his dear friend, the musician Ferruccio Busoni,²¹⁷ is unsure where he belongs due to his different linguistic affinities that are shaken up by the war: "'where do I belong?', he once asked me. 'When I wake up in the middle of a dream at night, I know I was speaking Italian in my dream. And then, when I write, I think in German'"'.²¹⁸

This confusion borne out of conflicting linguistic allegiances resurfaces when Zweig writes of the war being "hardest for those [Alsations] who, like René Schickele, were French at heart but wrote in German".²¹⁹ Their original attachment and affiliation with the German language could not remain untarnished following the rise of Nazism. Zweig himself, in fact, felt great shame at sharing his literary language with the language that was used to implement Nazi ideology, a shame that was surely deepened by his position as an exile in America – a country that did not share this connection to the German language and cultural heritage. Hannah

²¹⁶ Levi, *Sommersi*, 75.

²¹⁷ Zweig claims that from his youth on, he "had loved [Busoni's] work more than that of any other virtuoso" ("In the Heart of Europe"). Their friendship developed as Zweig attended the musical gatherings where Busoni would play.

²¹⁸ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "In the Heart of Europe".

²¹⁹ Ibid.

Arendt, another Germanophone exile in New York, made a point of clarifying how “it wasn’t the German language that went crazy”.²²⁰ Nevertheless, it must be noted that language is something that can never be fully taken away and definitively tarnished, even by one’s oppressors or by a society that stigmatises the use of one’s mother tongue.

Despite it not being Levi’s mother tongue, the German language and its connection to Nazism is a common feature of both Zweig and Levi’s narratives of travel, but is brought to the foreground most specifically in Levi’s *I sommersi e i salvati*, in which Levi overtly demonstrates the importance of denigrating the belief that one’s own language is superior to that of others. He writes of the German SS who considered, ignorantly, that “*chi non capiva né parlava il tedesco era per definizione un barbaro*” [those who neither understood nor spoke German were, by definition, barbarians].²²¹ By highlighting the closed-minded attitude to the linguistic diversity of Europe that is displayed by the SS, Levi shows how the SS consider any language that is not their own as a “*non-lingua*” [non-language]²²². Comments abound in *La tregua* that make it extremely obvious that Levi does not share this belief in the superiority of one’s mother tongue, and instead shows extraordinary coherence in embracing the German language with limited or no hostility.

Levi also demonstrates the innate untranslatability of languages. This is exemplified in the scene in *La tregua* where he describes helping his friend Cesare to seduce a Polish girl. Levi encounters difficulties in providing Cesare with appropriate Polish romantic expressions, claiming that certain romantic matters cannot be expressed “*in alcun’altra lingua oltre all’italiano e al francese*” [in any language other than Italian and French]. Indeed, the narrator

²²⁰ Prochnik, *The Impossible Exile*, Chapter V.

²²¹ Levi, *Sommersi*, 71.

²²² Ibid.

describes how his first contact with the Polish language fills him with “*una gioia insulsa e puerile*” [a puerile joy].²²³ Through Levi’s joy in discovering new words in foreign languages and his demonstration that certain concepts are untranslatable, the reader can perceive how each language provides a specific and unique way of seeing the world. Any concept or thought-pattern lacking in the one language, in the mother tongue for example, can be compensated for by reaching out towards the syntax and semantic richness of the other languages that one masters.

Theroux is also acutely aware that some ideas are better expressed in foreign languages than in English. In *The Pillars of Hercules*, Theroux writes that “in German there is a word, *Künstlerschuld*, which means “artist’s guilt,” the emotion a painter feels over his frivolity in a world in which people work in a rut that makes them gloomy”.²²⁴ By recognising that a word for this feeling does not exist in English, Theroux acknowledges that each language is a conduit to see the world through a different lens and is thus a factor for cultural enrichment. On a more practical level, Maalouf’s 2008 European language policy, *A Rewarding Challenge*, forwards the learning of multiple languages within Europe, encouraging European citizens to learn a Personal Adoptive Language that they can use as a mode of inquiry into a foreign culture.

In fact, in *La Torre di Babele*, an essay published in 1916, Zweig implies that it is precisely this difference between European languages that should have been celebrated as our greatest strength as a united continent during the period of political dysfunctionality of the last stages of the Hapsburg Empire before World War I, in which intellectuals were looking

²²³ Levi, *La tregua*, 100, 54.

²²⁴ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 121.

to strengthen international ties. In *La Torre di Babele*, Zweig provides a rather innovative portrayal of the Tower of Babel as having played a key role in solidifying Europe, thus turning the typical reading of the myth somewhat on its head:

*[gli uomini] Ringraziarono Dio per la punizione inflitta, lo ringraziarono per la molteplicità assegnata, perché in tal modo aveva dato loro la possibilità di gustarsi più volte il mondo e di amare con maggiore consapevolezza, dalle differenze, la propria unità.*²²⁵

Venturing into What is Linguistically New

In *A Rewarding Challenge*, an EU language policy from the early 21st century, Amin Maalouf exposes the innovative “personal adoptive language” policy, in which he makes “a clean break with the traditional logic behind language learning”, and encourages Europeans to choose to learn languages that they love, and not simply those that they need.²²⁶ In the context of this dissertation, it is interesting that Maalouf was chosen to head this committee of European intellectuals, since he is a philosopher caught between the East and the West, with shared allegiance to both France and Lebanon (and French and Arabic), and he identifies with both Islam and Christianity. From this privileged position, Maalouf argues that people should be encouraged to reflect not only on “utilitarian considerations” when choosing whether to learn foreign languages, but should also take into account that the “exploration of another linguistic and cultural universe can [...] bring enormous [...] emotional satisfaction”

²²⁵ Stefan Zweig, *Appello agli europei* (translated into Italian by Leonella Basiglini, IBS, 2015). [{Men} thanked God for the punishment that had been inflicted upon them, they thanked Him for the multiplicity that He had given them, because He had thus given them the opportunity to taste the world time and time again and to love their unity with a greater awareness of their differences].

²²⁶ Maalouf, *A Rewarding Challenge*, 17.

and can allow oneself to become immersed in another linguistic and cultural viewpoint from which to interpret the world.²²⁷ This becomes clear in the narratives of travel in question.

All three authors write enthusiastically about the unfamiliar languages that they encounter on their travels around Europe, sharing the peculiarities of these new tongues with their readership. For instance, Theroux's engagement with language is evident when he writes of his first contact with the island of Sardinia:

The first dish I was served was, appropriately, sardines. The root is the same, related to Sardinia, just as the word for a Sardinian plant ('which when eaten produced convulsive laughter, ending in death') had given us the word sardonic – derisive, sneering – because *sardonios* in Greek meant 'of Sardinia'.²²⁸

One could also cite his longwinded description of the word "shekel" in Israel – Theroux evidently does not fear that he is 'wasting space' in his narrative when he dedicates large portions to describing languages.²²⁹ This narrative technique is not restricted to *The Pillars of Hercules*, but is also evident in much of Theroux's travel writing in which he ventures outside Europe. In *The Happy Islands of Oceania*, Theroux also goes to great lengths to ensure that his readership engages with language as a key to a deeper understanding of the foreign culture that his writing presents.²³⁰ Theroux shows how untranslatable words risk becoming

²²⁷ Maalouf, *A Rewarding Challenge*, 14.

²²⁸ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 151.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 369.

²³⁰ For example, he makes an interesting observation about the similarities between the various languages of Oceania: "the new Guinea Pidgin word for a sarong was the local Pidgin word for vegetables wrapped in palm leaves", and "They had no word for love. For the Guugu Yimidirrh friendship was everything, the strongest bond in the world. Marriage was regarded as a bond of friendship, not love". Theroux, *The Happy Islands of Oceania*, 209, 91.

untranslatable concepts from one culture to the next and his writing strives to prevent this from happening.

Levi shows joy at explaining details even related to his own language, as can be seen in *Se questo è un uomo*, where he feels pride and urgency to explain the “Canto di Ulisse” from Dante’s *Divina commedia* to Pikolo in the concentration camp. He tackles the specificities of the Italian language that do not translate well: “*Sono in grado di spiegare a Pikolo di distinguere perché “misi me” non è “je me mis”, è molto più forte e più audace*” [I can point out why “I set forth” is not ‘je me mis’, it is much stronger and more audacious].²³¹ It is evident that Levi feels an insistence to communicate and explain the intricacies of Dante’s Italian language, culture and history to others and it is touching that Pikolo listens with such interest, knowing that the exchange is of as much use to Levi himself as it is to his interlocutor. For Levi, the “Canto di Ulisse” is directly connected to the meaning of his existence in the ‘afterlife’ of the lager. This episode of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* epitomises what humanity is and this is precisely what was being lost in the concentration camps, thus explaining Levi’s great sense of urgency in needing to share this with Pikolo. Equally, Levi consecrates several pages in the opening chapter of *Il sistema periodico* to describing the specificities of the Yiddish language. Later, writing of a language with roots in Hebrew and with Piedmont inflections that was spoken by his ancestors, Levi writes: “*il suo interesse storico è esiguo [...] ma è grande il suo interesse umano, come lo è quello di tutti i linguaggi di confine e di transizione*” [its historical interest is minor... but its human interest is notable, as it always is for border and transitional languages].²³²

²³¹ Levi, *Se questo è un uomo*, 142, 143.

²³² Levi, *Sommersi*, 8.

What happens then when the narrator cannot find a common language for communication? This results in frustration, an unavoidable occurrence in their travels around Europe and the Mediterranean. This is epitomised in the writing of Theroux, who takes note of what he ironically refers to as the “reality of United Europe” in the meeting between some Italian tourists and a French waitress in a French café just across the border from Italy. Theroux notes that “the border between France and Italy was simple to pass through, but the language barrier was insurmountable”.²³³ In order to surmount this barrier, however, and encourage the venturing into what is linguistically new, these narratives work to subvert this language barrier through the promotion of multilingualism. Theroux writes once again of the frustration of not sharing a common language in the part of his travels around the Mediterranean Sea that takes him to the north of Africa: “The maddening thing was my inability to speak to any Arabs. Their French I found peculiar and I don’t speak Arabic”.²³⁴

Nevertheless, in both *La tregua* and *Se questo è un uomo*, Levi often writes of “*la prima diffidenza e la difficoltà del linguaggio*” [the first diffidence and the linguistic obstacles] and of the numerous potential friendships that are not able to develop due to the lack of a mutual language of communication.²³⁵ In *La tregua*, in the transit camp in Staryje Doroghi, Levi explains that “*le difficoltà di linguaggio [gli] obbligavano a rapporti monchi e primordiali*” [the difficulties of language reduced [him] to stunted and primordial relationships] with the Russian officers.²³⁶ A similar situation is shown in the communication between Levi and a young Polish Jew in *Se questo è un uomo*. Levi writes: “*Vorrei domandargli molte cose ma il mio frasario tedesco è limitatissimo*” [I want to ask him many things, but my German

²³³ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 107.

²³⁴ Ibid., 94.

²³⁵ Levi, *La tregua*, 40.

²³⁶ Ibid., 190.

vocabulary is very limited].²³⁷ When the two characters finally manage to understand each other, a bond is formed. Levi writes: “*Ha capito; ora si alza, mi si avvicina e mi abbraccia timidamente*” [He has understood; he now gets up, approaches me and timidly embraces me].²³⁸ Before this timid embrace can finally take place, Levi’s description of these long and painful communicative difficulties shows that a lack of understanding of the language of the other fundamentally impedes human relations in the camps. In other situations, Levi demonstrates that this lack of understanding not only hinders, but also sometimes downright thwarts our capacity to connect. In trying to forge a friendship with Wachsmann, the *Scheissbegleiter* in the Lager, Levi writes that “*con questo non riesco a intendermi perché non abbiamo alcuna lingua in comune*” [I never manage to reach an understanding with him, as we have no language in common].²³⁹ By presenting all that is lost through a lack of linguistic prowess, Levi urges his readers to embrace a diversity of vocabularies with which to articulate the world, thus building bridges between different linguistic communities and the cultures that they represent.

Zweig, however, takes this reasoning further than the other two authors and actually praises the scholastic system that forwards language learning. He commends the school system in Austria because it incorporates the learning of many foreign languages: “French, English and Italian, classical Greek and Latin – that is to say, five languages in all”.²⁴⁰ Zweig thus discusses language learning in a more formal context than either Levi or Theroux, whose contact with the learning of new languages was mainly as a direct result of their own individual travels – in Theroux’s case, travel for pleasure; and in Levi’s case, enforced travel.

²³⁷ Levi, *Se questo è un uomo*, 34.

²³⁸ Ibid., 35.

²³⁹ Ibid., 84.

²⁴⁰ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “At School in the Last Century”.

Referencing Hans-Georg Gadamer, Zygmunt Bauman states that “in Europeanism, the perpetual effort to separate, expel and externalise is constantly thwarted by the drawing in, admission, accommodation and assimilation of the external”.²⁴¹ Bauman and Gadamer’s theory of this “intrinsically expansive culture” finds a post-war embodiment in all three of these narratives of travel, but Europe nowadays is unfortunately struggling to bring this extrinsically expansive culture to fruition on a linguistic level.

Promoting Intercultural Understanding

Thus far, we have seen that the three narratives of travel in question problematise the relationship between language and identity, and share their love for languages with their readership. These can be considered steps on the way to an overarching goal of celebrating linguistic difference and promoting multilingualism – of key importance in an inevitably multilingual Europe – that will be discussed here in this part of the chapter.

The first, and perhaps most obvious, way in which these three authors expose their readers to multilingualism is by using a multilingual narrative style. In *Se questo è un uomo*, Levi explains that “*la confusione delle lingue è una componente fondamentale del modo di vivere di quaggiù; si è circondati da una perpetua Babele*” [the confusion of languages is a fundamental component of the manner of living here [in Auschwitz]: one is surrounded by a perpetual Babel].²⁴² Levi is a plurilingual individual and his multilingual writing choice mirrors his all-embracing philosophy and attitude towards languages. In many passages in *La tregua*, Levi uses the technique of code-mixing and quotes direct speech in its original language. For

²⁴¹ Bauman, *Europe: An Unfinished Adventure*, 7.

²⁴² Levi, *Se questo è un uomo*, 44.

example, direct speech is quoted in French – “*Bon Dieu, c’est un français*”²⁴³; Russian – “*Po malu, po malu*”²⁴⁴; and Polish – “*Sto zlotych*”.²⁴⁵ Levi’s Auschwitz narratives are truly saturated with foreign words, directly imitating the multilingual context of this reality. In *Se questo è un uomo*, Levi shows how his rapport to the signified is no longer restricted to only one signifier²⁴⁶: “*Entro cinque minuti inizia la distribuzione del pane, del pane-Brot-Broid-chleb-pain-lechem-keynér*” [within five minutes begins the distribution of bread, of bread-Brot-Broid-chleb-pain-lechem-keynér].²⁴⁷ Similarly, Levi’s multilingual narrative style is evident when he writes of the Carbide Tower in Buna:

I suoi mattoni sono stati chiamati Ziegel, briques, tegula, cegli, kamenny, mattoni, téglak, e l’odio li ha cementati; l’odio e la discordia, come la Torre di Babele.

[its bricks were called *Ziegel, briques, tegula, cegli, kamenny, mattoni, téglak*, and they were cemented by hate; hate and discord, like the Tower of Babel].²⁴⁸

Theroux, like Levi, also shows great skill at transcribing accurate and detailed direct speech, in a variety of languages. In *The Pillars of Hercules*, for example, Theroux quotes foreigners that he encounters during his travels in their original language – in Spanish: “*presumido*”²⁴⁹, French: “*Paris, t’encule*”²⁵⁰, Italian: “*ferrigno*”²⁵¹, Albanian: “*nuk ka tren*”²⁵²,

²⁴³ Levi, *La tregua*, 20.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 19.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 97.

²⁴⁶ For more information on the concepts of signified and signifier, see Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (Columbia University Press, 2013).

²⁴⁷ Levi, *Se questo è un uomo*, 45.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 90.

²⁴⁹ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 73.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 90.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 157.

²⁵² Ibid., 261.

Turkish: “Geçmisolsun”²⁵³, and Hebrew: “sofer”.²⁵⁴ Theroux thus exposes his readership to a multiplicity of linguistic codes and resists the dominating and globalising power of English. He also manages to skilfully transcribe dialectal speech, such as between the Japanese man and the American from New Jersey, who meet on a train in Europe. Theroux does not include foreign words in his narrative to the detriment of the English language, but rather in order to further enrich it and widen his vocabulary choice. Accordingly, Theroux endorses allowing languages to interweave and accepts the resulting neologisms, in this case English ones, that appear in foreign languages.

The authors also use their narratives to praise the multilingual individuals that they encounter during their travels around Europe. Theroux, in his typical style, does not praise overtly; instead, his praise for those that have a handle on foreign languages is implicit in his denigration of those who do not. Zweig and Levi, on the other hand, are more explicit in their admiration. Zweig, for example, commends James Joyce’s linguistic skills: “He had four or five alternatives in each language for every word, including some dialect words, and understood every nuance of their meaning and weight”.²⁵⁵ Zweig’s positive representation of multilingual individuals is not only evident in his autobiography, but also in his fictional writing. *Letters from an Unknown Woman* still functions as a portal for Zweig to portray the human race in a way that underlines the values that he upholds. For instance, the man loved and idolised by the ‘unknown woman’ with “a kind of supernatural awe” is described as “a man who knew so many languages”.²⁵⁶ In the narrative, linguistic prowess is presented as reason enough for the unknown woman to fall in love with him. By constructing well-liked central characters that

²⁵³ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 336.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 385.

²⁵⁵ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “In the Heart of Europe”.

²⁵⁶ Stefan Zweig, *Letters from an Unknown Woman* (Kindle Edition, 2013).

represent his values, such as the embracing of multilingualism, Zweig endorses his outward-looking attitude in his works of fiction.

Levi also shows the deep respect he feels for multilinguals in his description in *I sommersi e i salvati* of the example of Mala Zimetbaum, a young Jewish woman who “*parlava correntemente molte lingue*” [spoke several languages fluently] and as a result “*godeva di una certa libertà di spostamento*” [could enjoy a certain freedom of movement] in Birkenau, where she ‘worked’ as an interpreter for other inmates.²⁵⁷ In both *La tregua* and *Se questo è un uomo*, multilingualism is represented as a definitively positive attribute too, as a skill that allows people to construct alliances, friendships and effective business negotiations. Each time Levi introduces a new character, language skills are always the first attribute mentioned. Almost unfailingly, linguistic prowess is referred to as a defining characteristic and comes before other more basic traits, such as age and physical appearance. For example, this can be noted in Levi’s first description of his resourceful Greek companion Mordo Nahum:

Oltre alla sua lingua, parlava spagnolo (come tutti gli ebrei di Salonicco), francese, un italiano stentato ma di buon accento, e, seppi poi, il turco, il bulgaro e un po’ di albanese. Aveva quarant’anni: era di statura piuttosto alta.

[Besides his own language, he spoke Spanish (like all Jews from Salonica), French, a halting Italian but with a good accent, and, as I found out later, Turkish, Bulgarian and a little Albanian. He was about forty; of fairly tall stature].²⁵⁸

Finally, the authors in question – most specifically Zweig and Levi from their ‘vantage point’ looking back at the European world that they so cherished – tackle the issue of the

²⁵⁷ Levi, *Sommersi*, 126.

²⁵⁸ Levi, *La tregua*, 38.

importance of creating a multilingual Europe, which functions on a basis of inter-lingual understanding, by highlighting their own involvement in works of translation. Translation, as Gilman reminds us in *The Special Languages of the Camps*, promotes the transfer of knowledge across “the borders around a language that resemble territorial borders” and, although a challenge, it is nevertheless one that it is necessary to confront in order to remain connected and transcend linguistic borders.²⁵⁹ In *The Other Heading*, Derrida tackles the issue of how difficult it will be to implement an appropriate philosophy of translation for Europe that will “both avoid the nationalistic tensions of linguistic difference and the violent homogenization of languages”.²⁶⁰ All the same, Derrida recognises the value of such an effort in promoting intercultural understanding.²⁶¹ Zweig’s narrative in particular resonates with Derrida’s belief in the importance of translation. As Harry Zohn writes in *Stefan Zweig, Literary Mediator*, “Zweig’s stature as a mediator among the literatures of Europe is truly an imposing one”.²⁶² Zweig worked widely as a translator of other writers’ works, thus showing his preoccupation with language and leading Zohn to write extensively of Zweig’s work translating Verhaeren. Zweig also translated several works by Rolland into German, and additionally, wrote biographies of both of these writers. Equally, he was very pleased when his own works were translated: “It was a great pleasure for me when I heard of publishers from other countries wanting to bring out my works in French, Bulgarian, Armenian, Portuguese, the Spanish of Argentina, Norwegian, Latvian, Finnish and Chinese”.²⁶³ Later, he

²⁵⁹ Gilman, *The Special Languages of the Camps*, 35.

²⁶⁰ Jacques Derrida, *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today’s Europe* (Indiana University Press, 1992), 58.

²⁶¹ László Marác, in *Multilingual Europe, Multilingual Europeans*, shares Derrida’s opinion that it is of value to promote an appropriate philosophy of translation for Europe, but goes one step further and states that “the promotion of a ‘Babylonian Europe’ [...] is neither very efficient nor practical” and that “translating into all the official languages is time and money consuming”. László Marác, *Multilingualism in Europe: Policy and Practice from Multilingual Europe, Multilingual Europeans*, edited by László Marác and Mireille Rosello (Rodopi B.V. Amsterdam, 2012), 22.

²⁶² Zohn, *Stefan Zweig*, 137-140.

²⁶³ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “Out into the World Again”.

states: “My words and ideas had reached readers in Braille, in shorthand symbols, in all kinds of exotic characters and idioms”.²⁶⁴ Like most cosmopolitan Jewish intellectuals, Zweig was brought up in a multilingual context, where “everyone spoke several languages”²⁶⁵ and he strove to continue to live in that vein, giving lectures around the world in French, English, Italian and German.²⁶⁶

Levi also gave great value to works of translation and, although he did not work as a translator himself, he took the translation of *Se questo è un uomo* very much to heart. When Levi writes of the suggestion to publish his books in German, he realises that “*i suoi [of his book] destinatari veri, quelli contro cui il libro si puntava come un’arma, erano loro, i tedeschi*” [those at whom the book was aimed, those who had the book pointing at them like a gun, were the Germans].²⁶⁷ Publishing in German was a very important decision for Levi and he communicated extensively with his translator to ensure that the power of his words was not diminished in translation.²⁶⁸

In their promotion of multilingualism, Zweig, Levi and Theroux promote knowledge transfer between European nations that transcends linguistic borders. They thus show the advantages of being multilingual and how having competency in several languages increases intercultural appreciation and ought to be an integral part of belonging to Europe.

²⁶⁴ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, “The Setting Sun”.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., “The World of Security”.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., “The Setting Sun”.

²⁶⁷ Levi, *Sommersi*, 138.

²⁶⁸ For more information, see the final chapter and epilogue of Levi, *I sommersi e i salvati*.

From very different perspectives – during World War II as Jewish untouchables in the eyes of the hegemonic power, or during the 90s as a well-off American backpacker – the three authors in question all show great respect for the varied linguistic communities that they encounter. This mutual respect for linguistic differences should be a founding pillar of European society. As Peter Kraus underlines in *A Union of Diversity*:

Under democratic conditions, language policy is not only a tool for establishing an extensive frame of communication, but it is also directed towards protecting the status or the ‘honour’ of the members of a linguistic community and overcoming collective resentment in institutional contexts marked by heterogeneity.²⁶⁹

Respecting the importance of the coexistence of these different linguistic groups allows Europe to create and strengthen the ‘unity in difference’ of Derrida’s envisioned European identity that “includes respect for *both* universal values *and* difference”.²⁷⁰ Whilst it is clear that protecting this diversity is certainly a challenge, Maalouf wisely states in his 2008 European language policy that it is *A Rewarding Challenge*. The benefits of accepting this challenge are far-reaching, and represent essential stepping-stones towards creating an all-embracing collective European linguistic identity.

In *La tregua*, Levi leaves his readers with an unsettling allegory of how the world would be without the linguistic diversity and interlingual understanding that Maalouf so keenly envisions. Levi describes attending an unnerving theatrical recital in the Staryje Doroghi transit camp of the *Cappello a tre punte*, a song in which all of the words are gradually

²⁶⁹ Peter A. Kraus, *A Union of Diversity. Language, Identity and Polity-Building in Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 77.

²⁷⁰ Jacques Derrida, *The Other Heading* (Indiana University Press, 1992). Quoted from *Introduction* by Michael B. Naas, xlv

replaced by silence until the whole song is just an agonising performance of awkward gestures.

*Cantavano: e ad ogni ripetizione, con l'accumularsi dei buchi sostituiti dai gesti malcerti sembrava che la vita, insieme con la voce, fuggisse da loro. Scandita dalla pulsazione ipnotica di un solo tamburo in sordina, la paralisi progrediva lenta e irreparabile. L'ultima ripetizione, nel silenzio assoluto dell'orchestra, dei cantori e del pubblico, era una straziante agonia, un conato moribondo.*²⁷¹

To my mind, this world of silence resembles the world of compartmentalised monolinguals that Maalouf is fighting against with *A Rewarding Challenge*, and that the travel narratives of Zweig, Levi and Theroux are also fighting to subvert. Levi's description of this performance reminds us that we must not let language and languages die. Let us therefore heed his message and continue to reach out towards other languages and cultures. Let us heed the message of Maalouf and not underestimate the importance of the rich, cultural heritage of Europe's linguistic diversity. Let us never stop learning and speaking all of the languages of Europe. Otherwise, the *Cappello a tre punte*'s chilling depiction of a silent world without inter-lingual understanding may be all that remains for the Europe to come.

²⁷¹ [They sang; and at every repeat, with the accumulation of gaps replaced by uncertain gestures, it seemed as if life, as well as voice, would drain from them. With the rhythm accentuated by the hypnotic pulsation of a single muted drum, the paralysis proceeded slowly and ineluctably. The final repetition, with absolute silence from orchestra, singers and public, was an excruciating agony, a deathly retching]. Levi, *La tregua*, 210.

V. Europe is Just the Beginning

The European Union can be understood as an important stage along the route towards a politically constituted world society – Jürgen Habermas

In *The Postnational Constellation*, Habermas notes that there are contemporary threats, such as the hole in the ozone layer and international drug trafficking, which do not respect national borders and, especially in a globalised world, are thus unmanageable at a purely national level.²⁷² To successfully handle these issues, nations need to unite to form a global citizenry. For Habermas, this has already been achieved to a certain extent within Europe, since he writes that Europe is “an exemplary case” of democratic politics that reach beyond the nation-state, where “a social integration based on mutual understanding, intersubjectively shared norms, and collective values” can already be observed in action,²⁷³ thanks to the shared sovereignty of nation-states within the EU.²⁷⁴ To take this ideology one step further and create a global community, Habermas believes that, after primarily creating a post-national form of government, we must create a ‘constellation’ in which members identify with the community and feel a sense of mutual responsibility towards each other without needing a ‘global government’ to enforce this belonging through a set of restrictive

²⁷² Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation*, 70.

²⁷³ Ibid., 82.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 88.

rules. This would allow members to join the self-ruling global community as an active choice rather than as an obligation.

The narratives of both Zweig and Theroux are proponents of Habermas' optimistic philosophy, portraying the construction of a European identity as just one phase in the journey towards world peace and global democracy, and towards creating Immanuel Kant's universal community of moral persons or 'Kingdom of Ends'. Morand's *L'Europe galante* does not deal with this issue directly and neither does Levi in *La tregua*, although his narrative is permeated with a sense of the universal "common humanity" that unites people in a situation of extreme hardship. In the final part of this dissertation, I will concentrate specifically on how Habermas' philosophy finds forms of embodiment in *The World of Yesterday* and *The Pillars of Hercules*.

Zweig's narratives form "an idea of the world as a whole"²⁷⁵ and show an early anticipation of Habermas' theories – unsurprising considering his experience of Vienna as the capital of the transnational Habsburg or Austro-Hungarian Empire – in that it shows that achieving global citizenry is a developmental process that must begin with the creation of a sense of national and post-national affinity before then reaching beyond to a global scale. When Zweig writes of his belief in "the existence of a German, a European, an international conscience", he clearly shows the steps that he perceives must be taken in order to create a sense of global citizenry.²⁷⁶ Interestingly, they appear to pre-empt Habermas' theories by approximately seventy years.

²⁷⁵ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, "At School in the Last Century".

²⁷⁶ Ibid., "Incipit Hitler".

Never referring to Europe, and using instead the more globally inclusive concept of the 'Mediterranean', as discussed in 'Beyond Eurocentrism' (54), Theroux's travel narrative unites Europe with its Eastern 'Other' through their shared vicinity to the Mediterranean Sea. This unique body of water creates a unifying link and a sense of community between East and West in *The Pillars of Hercules*, which is innovative in its refusal to adhere to current xenophobic attitudes towards the mainly Muslim countries that border the Mediterranean from Africa and Asia. In Theroux's view, these borders are, after all, entirely arbitrary. Theroux is also loath to use the names of countries to identify towns and cities, preferring to refer to them instead as being simply Mediterranean. This can be seen, for instance, when he writes of Tangier: "It [Tangier] seemed to me not Moroccan but Mediterranean – a place that had closer links to the other cities on the Mediterranean than it did to its own country".²⁷⁷

In part thanks to his measured word choices, Theroux's interweaving of Eastern and Western cultures throughout the Mediterranean appears seamless and completely natural. One culture seems to flow into the other as the tide ebbs forwards and back across the shore. Theroux writes: "There was no place that I had seen on my entire trip that was one thing – a single people, the same face, the same religion, all dressed the same. One of the pleasures of the Mediterranean was the way in which the complex cultures had intermingled".²⁷⁸ For example, Theroux shows that many inhabitants of Tunis "could have been Italian, Spanish, Greek, Sardinian, Turkish, Albanian – and probably were. In Tunisia, Europe and all its colors met North Africa and all its colors, and one blended into the other".²⁷⁹ This inclusive concept of identity construction is, to my mind, the edifying pillar of Theroux's *Pillars of Hercules*, in

²⁷⁷ Theroux, *The Pillars of Hercules*, 498.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 476.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 471.

that it reaches beyond conventional conceptualisations of Europe and dares to include the Eastern 'Other', which a depressing majority of the inhabitants of today's Europe seem to be seeking to exclude and eliminate from its socio-political and cultural horizons.²⁸⁰

In conclusion, both Zweig and Theroux's work contains echoes of Habermas' all-encompassing philosophy. Zweig positions himself as what could almost be seen as a precursor to Habermas' theories in how precisely he mirrors Habermas' stance concerning the construction of a global community. Theroux, on the other hand, naturally approaches the issue from a more contemporary perspective, and also addresses the matter of the relationship between Islam and Europe with subtlety and finesse – a topic which, for historical reasons, was not a concern of *The World of Yesterday*. As Maalouf notes in *In the Name of Identity*, one must always be alert to Eurocentric approaches and must instead create a new global civilisation in which "everyone must be able to recognise himself".²⁸¹ To my mind, the works of both Zweig and Theroux are particularly relevant in the context of the Europe of today in that they help "to build bridges to the other", in the words of Maalouf, not only between the various countries of Europe but also between Europe and the rest of the world.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ For more information concerning identity construction and Islam in Europe, see Amin Maalouf: *In the Name of Identity*. Herein, Maalouf notes that if European were more tolerant and welcoming towards Islam and Muslims, there would be less tension. His essay underlines the importance of reciprocity in terms of respect for one's identity, customs, traditions and languages.

²⁸¹ Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity*, (Penguin, 2001), 120.

²⁸² Ibid.

VI. Final Conclusions

As Alasdair Blair notes in *The European Union since 1945*, the challenges of the 21st century “necessitate the EU acting as a collective group”.²⁸³ In today’s Europe more than ever, the importance of collaborating and creating a sense of cultural and socio-political collectiveness is paramount. In this dissertation, I have examined how four twentieth century texts positioned at the crossways between novels of travel and autobiographical narratives explore and conceptualise Europe. I have proved that narratives of travel are more than the mere “cultural escapism” that Matthew Graves describes in *The Death and Renaissance of the Travel Book*; I have shown, in fact, that travel writing can be of the utmost importance in creating a united European identity.²⁸⁴ In this dissertation, I have demonstrated how the writings of the four authors in question converge and diverge on key issues that play an important role in the construction of European cultural identity today, and present an edifying enactment of Kraus’ concept of Europe as a ‘union in diversity’.

To close, I would like us too to take a step outside of Europe, in much the same way that the authors in question look back at Europe from a distance. Let us look back at Europe from Canada, where Ajay Heble talks of Glenn Gould’s radio documentary, *The Idea of North*, and the cultural significance of ‘counterpoint’.²⁸⁵ Heble describes how Gould creates contrapuntal radio and thus gives voice to many different groups within society, whilst taking into consideration the principle of “de-hierarchization” and giving equal weight to each voice

²⁸³ Alasdair Blair, *The European Union since 1945* (Pearson Education Limited, 2010), 112.

²⁸⁴ Graves, “*Nowhere Left to Go?*”, 55.

²⁸⁵ In this documentary, Gould interweaves recording of many different Canadians speaking. Each speaker’s voice is given equal weight in the interplay of their discourses. Counterpoint in a musical sense refers to music that is composed of two lines of melody of equal importance, rather than the more familiar style of melody and accompaniment.

involved.²⁸⁶ In analysing Gould's counterpoint, Heble notes that "counterpoint remains useful because it forces us to acknowledge the unsustainability of notions of cultural purity".²⁸⁷

How could these ideas could be related to the European discourse of creating a 'union in diversity', in which equal importance is given to the various component countries that make up the diverse and unified European whole? By giving equal value to the many different cultural and ethnic groups that constitute Canadian society, the concept of counterpoint "works to unsettle [...] processes of identity formation" that consider that "a homogenous society is a necessary prerequisite for Canadian nationalism".²⁸⁸ Compared to Europe, Canada has been relatively successful at uniting these differing groups through an official multiculturalism policy introduced in the 1970s. Applying this to European discourse, one can conclude that counterpoint would be a valid identity construction method to apply to our continent as well. Heble's article also refers to Robert Kroetsch's seminal essay *Disunity as Unity: A Canadian Strategy*, whose title has echoes of Kraus' conceptualisation of Europe as a 'union in diversity', and whose main argument is that the very fact that Canadians "insist on staying multiple" is, in fact, their greatest power. Let us then heed the message of Morand, Zweig, Levi and Theroux and 'insist on staying multiple' in Europe too, and strive to create Beck's "Europe that helps diversity to flourish"²⁸⁹, in which difference is regarded not as our weakness, but rather as our edifying strength.

²⁸⁶ Ajay Heble, *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism: Democracy, Counterpoint, Responsibility* (Broadview Press, 1997), 86.

²⁸⁷ Heble, *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*, 93. This concept is also dealt with by Edward Said, "a long-time admirer of Gould" (Heble, 86) and is further developed very eloquently by Taiye Selasi in her T.E.D. talk in October 2014 entitled *Don't ask where I'm from, ask where I'm a local*, in which she states that "the myth of national identity and the vocabulary of coming from confuses us into placing ourselves into mutually exclusive categories".

²⁸⁸ Heble, *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*, 90, 89.

²⁸⁹ Beck, *Understanding the Real Europe*, 13.

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